

Structure

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19.1 INTRODUCTION

Administrative and institutional structures are the extensions of the 'state' in all political formations. It is through these structures that political control is extended from a core area — such as the political capital of a kingdom — to the outer reaches of the kingdom or empire.

Political control of the kingdom, especially in the early phases of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, was often tenuous, and uprisings and challenges to royal authority were a frequent occurrence. The political foundation of the sultanate stabilised after more than 100 years and the important instrument of political control over the outlying areas of the sultanate were the various administrative structures introduced and maintained by the central government. After the armies of the rulers had annexed a particular territory, it would often be difficult to retain control over these newly conquered domains; it was here that the administrative structures of the centre, once introduced, would help in maintaining political control.

19.2 BACKGROUND

Islam spread outside Arabia since the time of the pious Caliphs (Abu-Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali). To begin with the newly conquered territories were governed by the

Governors appointed by the Caliph. In due course of time the dynastic ruler got established in most of the regions. The beginning of dynastic monarchy can be traced to the establishment of Ummayyid power. Ummayyid period was marked by the dominance of Arabs and the unity of Muslims. The Republican Caliphate had been transformed into a monarchy supported by a governing class around 661 AD. Abbasid period (with capital at Baghdad) saw the ascendancy of Persians in the administration and the gradual shrinking of the territorial control of the caliphate. Under the Ummayyids and Abbasids heredity and nomination were the norms which determined succession to the Caliphate. The Fatimid caliphate of Egypt (followers of Shia sect) emerged as a rival and posed a threat to the Abbasids.

During the Abbasid period an elaborate administrative system was established which consisted of several departments eg., *Diwan-ul-kharj* (board of taxes), *Diwan-ul-dhiyyal* (board of crown lands), etc. The Wizarat also existed in this period though it was Persian in origin.

According to U.N. Day (*Government of the Sultanate* p. 22) “when the Caliphate began to decline and distant provinces turned independent muslim kingdoms this pattern was adopted by them with necessary modifications. The Turkish Sultans of Delhi also adopted many offices from this pattern and made additions and alterations in them as demanded by the various administrative problems they were called upon to solve”.

With the weakening of the Abbasid Caliphate many minor dynasties ruled over Persia for example the Samanids and Ghaznavids in eastern Persia. The kingdom of Ghazna was established by the Turkish slaves. The tradition of Turkish slaves as bodyguards can be traced back to Caliph Mutassim (Abbasid). Subuktagin the father of Mahmud of Ghazna had been taken captive in tribal conflicts and sold in the market as a slave. The Ghaznavid rule was consolidated by Subuktagin after he was elected as chief to the throne of Ghazna. In the 10th and 11th Century AD. Ajam (non Arab lands) witnessed the rise of Sultanates (the lands of Persians and Turks) and the ascendancy of Turks as a military and governing class. However, the establishment of Turkish army is attributed to the Samanids.

Subuktagin's position was subordinate to the Samani overlord who derived his authority over Sind, Khurasan, Turkistan, Mawaraunnahr, Jurja from the Khalifa of Baghdad. When Mahmud came to power he freed the state of Ghazna from the tutelage of the Samanids and adopted the title of 'Amir' and 'Sultan'. His position was further reinforced by the sanction of the Khalifa of Baghdad.

Under the Ghaznavids both ability and heredity influenced succession to the throne however under Mahmud descent became more important. The Ghaznavids did not accept the policy of partitioning the Empire whereas the Ghorids did resort to it. The practice of the division of the kingdom and the nomination of the successor outside the royal house did not get acceptance under the Ghaznavids.

The Ghorids (in Afghanistan) belonged to the Shansabani dynasty. Though initially subordinate to the Ghaznavids they conquered Ghazna and subsequently invaded Multan in India which had been attacked by Mahmud of Ghazni earlier. The Ghaznavids and Ghorids traced their ancestry to the ancient families of Turan and Iran. Under the Ghorids general consent of the clan and might were important factors which decided the issue of succession.

Qutbuddin (slave of Ghorid ruler) was the governor of Hansi which formed a part of the Ghorid Empire. He was an efficient general and was the son-in-law of Yalduz the favourite slave of Ghorid Sultan. After the Sultan's death Qutbuddin obtained the letter of manumission and the *Chatr* (royal umbrella) and *Durbash* (baton) and tried to assert his independence. Subsequently, Iltutmish (Turkish slave officer and son-in-law of Qutbuddin who was governor of Badaon) made Delhi the capital and established himself

as an independent ruler of India. Nomination, selection by nobles, ability, heredity and recognition from the Caliph were important parameters which shaped the succession issue.

19.3 SULTAN AND THE CAPITAL CITY: NODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS

The node of the administrative apparatus was the Sultan. He was the ruler of the entire realm, and after accession to the throne — he had absolute power in his hands. He was the supreme commander of the army, and it was he, or officers appointed by him, who led armies to conquer other areas. Thus, the sultan was in many ways the head of the administrative system. This is applicable to almost all the sultans of the Delhi sultanate, with some exceptions like Sultan Ruknuddin Firuz, Sultan Muizzuddin Bahram, Sultan Alauddin Masud, and Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, in whose times cliques of nobles at the court are said to have been more powerful. But even in these infrequent instances, the sultan remained the ceremonial head of the entire political establishment of the empire.

Fatwa-I-Jahandari of Barni-II, Advice XV on the king's high resolve, according to M. Habib and Dr. Afsar Begum "... this advice deals with the following topics: (i) High resolve is the distinguishing feature of a great king; (ii) The king with high resolve is characterised by his generosity; (iii) Miserliness is incompatible with high resolve; (iv) Wise men have enumerated 11 characteristics of a King with high resolve; (v) Praises of Sultan Mahmud and (vi) five conditions which a King should observe when conquering foreign lands". *Medieval India Quarterly*; Vol. III, Nos. 3 and 4, January, April 1958, Prof. M. Habib and Dr. Afsar Begum, Pg. 151.

The capital city and its surrounding areas were often areas where direct central control - administrative and otherwise — was prevalent. Since it was in the close vicinity of the ruler, central control was most strongly felt in these areas. The ruler, the nobles, the court, royal architecture, trade, urbanisation, all were more focussed on these regions, and hence the administrative apparatus was also elaborate and prominent. This created the core area of political control. However, a defining feature of this area was also that most of the people who lived in this area were 'professionals', namely, non-agriculturists. These classes and groups had to be sustained from the produce of other areas of the empire; and for that to happen, the surplus produce had to be collected from the agriculturists mostly through the various taxation measures introduced and imposed by the centre on these areas.

Thus, the very nature of politics at the time engendered the need to introduce centrally monitored apparatuses of control and regulation. First, political conquest of a new area was never enough to ensure its integration into the political empire for it could easily break away at an opportune moment if there was insufficient central control. Second, the "parasitic" nature of the governing classes, along with other groups such as artisans, traders, soldiers, etc. meant that resources had to be appropriated — sometimes by force — from other parts of the empire for the maintenance of this political structure. Bureaucratisation was often highest in the core areas, with a gradation of political/bureaucratic control as one moved farther and farther away from the core. These in total comprised the territory of the state, all areas being tied in their recognition of the supremacy of the sultan in their domains.

19.4 NOBILITY

Qutbuddin ascended the throne without any conflict since the Muizzi (Muizzuddin Ghori, The Ghorid ruler) nobles accepted him as their superior and offered their loyalty to him.

Iltutmish's accession to the throne of Delhi constituted an important landmark in the growth of Turkish nobility in India. This reflected the power of the nobles to select their leaders through armed strength. Now heredity and nomination the principles of sovereignty and leadership were relegated to the background. Nobles in Delhi acquired prominence in selecting the ruler and Delhi became the hub of political activity of Turkish rule. Iltutmish is credited with the establishment of a sovereign Turkish state in India and the nobility in his time consisted of efficient administrators who though slaves were imbued with merit and ability. After Iltutmish the hereditary principle again resurfaced with the accession of Ruknuddin Firoz, Raziya and Bahram Shah. During this phase the tussle between the Turkish and Tajik (Arab and Persians) nobles became intense. After Iltutmish's death (1235) till the accession of Balban (1269), the Chihalgani slaves (group of 40 nobles of which Balban was also a part) decided the succession issue. Balban tried to restore the supremacy of the crown by crushing the power of the Turkish nobility. Balban's accession demonstrated that the hereditary principle was no longer relevant. Both Qutbuddin and Iltutmish considered the nobles at par with themselves. Balban made a major departure. He maintained a distance from the nobility and believed in divine theory of kingship. He traced his ancestry to the mythical king Afrasiyab of Ajam (non-Arab lands). Balban tried to weaken the power of the Shamsi (Shamsuddin Iltutmish) nobles. The accession of Jalaluddin Khalji (1290) to the throne established that heredity was not always the basis of the sovereignty and kingship. Ability and force were also important factors in the succession to the throne.

During the rule of Khaljis and Tughlaqs the doors of nobility were opened to people of diverse backgrounds and it was no more the preserve of the Turks only. According to M. Habib (Medieval India Quarterly, pg. 230) "During the period of slave kings membership of the higher bureaucracy was dangerous for an Indian Musalman and impossible for a Hindu. But the Khilji revolution seems to have brought about a change. Amir Khusrau in his *Khazainul Futuh* tells us that Sultan Alauddin sent an army of thirty thousand horsemen under a Hindu officer, Malik Naik, the *Akhur-bek Maisarah*, against the Mongols, Alibeg, Tartaq and Targhi. The position of low-born men (whether Hindus or Muslims) in the government of Mohammad bin Tughlaq was the natural culmination of a process covering a century and a half." Barani criticises Mohammadbin Tughlaq and says "... He assigned the Diwan-i-Wizarat (Ministry of Revenue) to Pera Mali (the Gardner), the lowest of the low born and mean born men of the Hind and Sind and placed him over the heads of maliks, amirs, walis and governors (maqta's)" (Medieval India Quarterly, pg. 229). During the Lodi period except for the reigns of Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi, tribal concept of equality of the Afghans determined the official attitude towards the nobility.

19.5 ULEMA AND THE LEARNED IN THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO RELIGIOUS REALM

But before proceeding to study the various administrative offices and institutions at work in the Delhi Sultanate, it is important to understand that bureaucratic administration was only one important way in which the centre made its authority and presence felt in the larger political realm. An institutional feature of the political discourse of the Delhi Sultanate was the presence of the *Ulema* [theologians] both at the court, and in the provinces through the offices of the *Qazi* and officials manning the educational institutions.

There has been a lot of debate amongst historians about the nature of the state in the Delhi Sultanate. It seems reasonable to assume in the light of the available evidence that politics and religion functioned in separate areas despite appearing to complement one another. The *Ulema* as a group consisted of persons who performed the role of the preachers and guardians of Islamic religion, and [at least in the initial stages of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate] most of the them had come from outside the subcontinent. Traditionally, they were committed to upholding the Islamic religious order,

and thus acted as socio-moral censors for the Muslim community at large. The *Ulema* rose as a powerful political faction and on account of the high judicial positions held by them they could sway the king and the nobility in their favour. They held important positions in the administrative system particularly in the judiciary. Prof. Habib points out "...Under these conditions wise kings adopted a policy of compromise and moderation. They paid lip homage to the *Shari'at* and admitted their sinfulness if they were unable to enforce any of its provisions; they kept the state controlled *mullahs* disciplined and satisfied; over the whole field of administration concerning which the *Shari'at* is silent or nearly silent, they made their own laws; if the traditional customs of the people were against the *Shari'at*, they allowed them to override the *Shari'at* under the designation of Urf. Thus state laws called *Zawabit* grew under the protection of the monarchy. If these laws violated the *Shari'at* the principle of necessity or of *istihasan* (the public good) could be quoted in their favour. And the back of the *shari'at* was broken for the primary reason that it had provided no means for its own development". ('Politics and society during the early medieval period', *Collected works of Muhammad Habib*, Volume-II, p.312.)

At the centre, the *ulema* functioned as the religious benchmark of the political empire — apart from acting as judges [mostly in civil cases], alims were sometimes appointed as principals of *madrasas* [educational institutions] such as Minhajuddin Siraj, the author of the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, who was appointed to head the Nasiriyya Madrasa in Delhi. Through these formal and informal channels, the primary aim of the *ulema* was to spread the religious Word, and uphold the Islamic religio-moral order as far as was possible. This was often a contentious issue since the Sultan's ultimate objective was never the glorification of Islam but the success of the political life of the Sultanate. Given the fact that the majority of the subject population was non-Muslim, the sultan was more keen to act in a politically tactful way rather than solely uphold the banner of religion.

This brought the interests of the *ulema* and the sultan in direct clash on frequent occasions, and the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq is particularly significant in this regard. Muhammad bin Tughluq had appointed a number of non-Muslims in royal service since they were meritorious, and alims like and Ziauddin Barani strongly condemned it in their writings. Fakhr-i-Mudabbir's *Adabu'l Harb Was'h Shujaa't* written in the honour of Sultan Iltutmish also lays emphasis on the noble birth of state officials. Mohammad Tuqhlqa's policies show that the upholding of religious ideals was not always the priority of the Sultan. Moreover, the interests of the Sultan and the *ulema* and the learned hardly coincided.

Barani emphasises on noble birth and says "On the noble birth of the supporters of the state... the person selected should for certain have the advantage of free, gentle and noble birth.... For to promote base, mean, low born and worthless men to be the helpers and supporters of the government has not been permitted by any religion, creed, publicly accepted tradition or state law. Fatwa-i-Jahandari, Advice XIX, Medieval India Quarterly, Prof. Muhammad Habib and Afsar Begum, p. 175.

Sa'id Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, in his *Adabul Harb was'h Shujaa't* (rules of war which deal with warfare and statecraft) writes that "... the king should consider it essential to investigate and thoroughly inquire into the antecedents of the members of the army and scholars ... the king should not allow those to occupy high posts whose forefathers have not been men of letters and have not served in the government or have not been in the service of kings, nobles and wazirs ... their actions lead to the fall of the kingdom and create trouble for the state and the people. (cf. Appendix in Yusuf Hussain's Indo-Muslim Polity, pp. 221 and 228.

The *Ulema* preached obedience to the Word of God, among common people, nobles and even to the sultan. Thus, as a corollary, they were an important instrument of social control since the message of obedience that they imposed on the Muslim subject population, as well as others engendered notions of obedience and hierarchy which worked towards formulating a royal political discourse. Of course, the sultan did not depend solely on the abstractions of religion for administrative control, but instituted a number of other offices to establish his control in the core areas and extend his control over the larger political realm.

19.6 EVOLUTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS OF THE DELHI SULTANATE

There is very little information regarding administration available for the period of the Delhi Sultanate, especially for the first 100 years. The political canvas of the northern part of the Indian subcontinent before the advent of the Turks was fragmented, and the political empires immediately northwest [Ghazni and, later, Ghur] had long been interested in searching for fortunes in the subcontinent. This had led to intermittent invasions but not to the development of an elaborate administrative apparatus since the invaders did not plan to set up an empire in the subcontinent. The indigenous rulers, on the other hand, belonged to fragmented political dynasties and the administrative structure was often one that had been developing through the centuries, mutating and adapting to the changing conditions.

19.6.1 Blend of West Asian and Central Asian Traditions

When Qutubuddin Aybak declared himself as an independent Sultan at Lahore — no systematic administrative apparatus existed. Consequently, what emerged was a mixture of politico-administrative institutions from Central Asia and beyond as practised in the realms of the Ghurid empire, and a formal recognition of the prevailing administrative structures in the various parts of the sultanate as it expanded within the subcontinent. As long as the local rulers (Rajas, Rais and Ranas) recognised the supremacy of the Sultan in Delhi, they were largely left to their devices to collect the taxes and send it to the central treasury as tribute. It appears that the centre often appointed a host of officers (*Amil*, *Karkuns*, etc.) to be present in the various realms of the sultanate but only to assist the intermediaries (*Khots*, *Muqaddams* and *Chaudharies*) in their administrative tasks; it was only in later times, from the late 13th century, that central authority in the outer realms was well established.

Before we proceed to discuss the administrative structure and institutions of Delhi Sultanate we would like to give you a brief idea about the impact of central and west Asian institutions on the Delhi Sultanate.

The administrative structures and institutions introduced in India by the Ilbari (tribe) Turks were Abbasid and Persian in origin which had been transformed under the Samanids, Ghaznavids, Ghorids and Seljukids (Turks who ruled in Persia).

Iqta System

The iqta was a territorial assignment given to administrative officers and nobles in lieu of the services they performed for the state. The holder of iqta was designated as *muqti*. The *muqti* was responsible for the collection of revenue from these territories and also worked as administrative head. They were supposed to retain the revenue equivalent to their personal pay as well as the salaries of troops employed by them. The surplus if any was to be deposited in royal treasury. We will discuss iqta system in detail under the section revenue administration.

It is generally accepted that the Iqta system was established at the end of the Abbasid period and got consolidated during the Seljuk period. Its origin has been attributed to various factors:

- 1) The development of mercenary armies in place of citizen armies.
- 2) Some scholars consider it to be a bureaucratic and administrative apparatus, which got transformed into a military organization on account of the need to maintain the army through land assignments when the gold economy collapsed.
- 3) The Turkoman (Turks) tribal movements had led to the emergence of the idea of tribal concept of land as the joint property of the tribe headed by a Chief.

Although, there were several types of Iqtas in west and central Asia the system adopted in India was based on the Seljuk pattern which was called the Mustaghall type of Iqta in which no hereditary rights were permitted. In this both military and administrative features were important but slowly military became predominant. The Iqta served as the foundation of the political and military system of the Turks.

The Mongol Influence

An important point which needs to be discussed is the influence of Mongol inroads on central and west Asia and the effect of Mongol institutions on Turkish rule in India. Just as Balban's theory of sovereignty was inspired by Sassanid (Persian) traditions similarly Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and his Khurasani nobles tried to adopt the ideas of Mongol Khans and were probably influenced by the Mongol Yassa (steppe governing class and its traditions). Muhammad Bin Tughlaq's policy of enforcing strictness in the administration (army and nobility), the egalitarian attitude towards all subjects and refusal to give special status to Ulema and appointment of Hindus in the nobility had resemblance to the Mongol traditions and Yassa. Mongol ideas affected the organisation of the nobility and army under the Tughlaqs. The Amiran-i-sada and Hazara were Mongol and Afghan in origin and initially joined the service of Alauddin Khalji. They became prominent in Muhammad Tughlaq's reign. His token currency experiments were also borrowed from Mongol measures in China and Firoz Tughlaq's attempt to make Iqtas hereditary was based on the Mongol ruler Ghazan Khan's reforms which made shares and assignment of lands to nobles and soldiers hereditary.

19.6.2 Unique Features Introduced in the Indian Subcontinent: Change and Continuity

From the outset, the sultans were aware of the unique nature of the Delhi sultanate, which meant that it was for the first time in the political history of Islam that an Islamic ruling group found itself in a position of political control over a largely non-Islamic subject population. However, Jizyah was imposed as a separate tax which even the Brahmins had to pay during the reign of Feroze Tughlak. These measures were resorted to by individual sultans but the general character of the state continued to be based on political expediency. The term Jizyah like Kharaj is mentioned in the Quran and indicates a tax or tribute. Jizyah was traditionally imposed on non-muslims in lieu of protection of life and property and exemption from military service. It was not exacted uniformly from all non muslims. Children, women, illiterate etc. were exempt from it. Jizyah is considered by Sunni Jurists as a lawful tax.

Upendra Nath Day maintains that although the sultans of Delhi had to introduce particular measures to suit the conditions of the newly established sultanate, they did try to 'adjust them and keep them in conformity with the ideas and principles developed in Arabia and Persia' (U.N. Day, *The Government of the Sultanate*, (reprint) Delhi, 1993, p.2). This, however, seems to be more applicable to particular offices and institutions like that of the **wazir**, **qazi**, **iqta**, etc. rather than to the administrative system as a whole. At the local (village level) Patwaris and village head man continued to perform their traditional role.

The Sultanate as already indicated was spread in large areas with a core and outlying provinces. The large extent of the sultanate necessitated the evolution of administrative apparatus separately for the centre and the provinces. Therefore, it is useful to study the administrative institutions of the Delhi Sultanate at the centre and provincial areas separately. Those at the centre were the areas of direct administration, and the administrative apparatus developed and expanded with the territorial expansion of the empire.

19.7 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Central administration in the Delhi sultanate during the period of Ilbari Turks (slave dynasty) was carried out mostly by trusted slaves [appointed to administrative positions by the sultan] who had helped the sultan to acquire the throne; or by the members of the royal household and family. Loyalty was therefore a prerequisite for holding the high office and was given the highest rewards. The Sultan was the head of the administration with all military, administrative and legal powers. A number of separate departments were created to look after different aspects of administration. We will discuss these separately under this section.

19.7.1 *Wizarat*

After the seat of the sultan, the most important office in the sultanate was the *Diwan-i-Wizarat*, headed by the *wazir*. He had under him a naib *wazir*. Derived from the Persian and Abbasid traditions, the *wazir* [prime minister] was the most important person in the royal court, and his role was of a general supervisor over all departments. He was the primary advisor to the sultan, and often gave advice which, in retrospect it is possible to say, may have shaped the course of history. For instance, Nizam ul-Mulk Junaidi, the *wazir* of Sultan Iltutmish is credited with the famous warning to the sultan that Muslims in India were like 'salt in a dish', i.e., a minority who could easily be overturned. The wisdom reflected in such a statement reveals both the strength required to occupy the position, as also the importance given to the office by the sultan. Theoretically, the *wazir* was supposed to take the sultan's permission prior to every decision he made; however, in practice it may not have been so as is evident from the cases when *wazirs* would actually become more powerful than the sultans. The case of the *wazir* Khwaja Muhazzab [in the reign of Sultan Alauddin Masud Shah] is one such example.

Sai'd Fakhr-I-Mudabbir's, *Adabul Harb Was'h Shujaa't* (Rules of war and bravery) Indo-Muslim Polity, Yusuf Husain, Appendix, Status of the Wazir, pp.229. "... The *wazir* is responsible for the prosperity of the kingdom, the collection of revenues, recruitment of the army, the appointment of tax collectors, the checking of accounts, the inspection of workshop – wards, the reckoning of horses, camels and other cattle, the payment of salary to the army, the retinue and other working people. He is responsible for the contentment of his subjects, the welfare of the well-wishers of the state, the payment of remuneration to scholars, the caring for the widows and orphans, the patronizing of the `ulama,' the maintenance of order in the country, the organization of administration and for looking after the affairs of the people."

The main function of the *wazir* was to look after the financial organisation of the state, give advice to the sultan, and on occasions to lead military expeditions at the sultan's behest. Another important function included supervising the payment to the army, the largest "non-producing" class of royal retainers. His office also kept a check on land revenue collections from different parts of the empire. The *Wizarat* maintained a record of all the income and expenditure incurred by the state. therefore, the salaries of all royal servants in different parts of the empire were controlled and/or recorded by this office. Charitable donations such as *waqfs*, *inams*, etc were also handled by this department.

Further, the mints, the royal buildings, intelligence departments and other sundry affiliations of the royal court like the *karkhanas*, were all supervised by the Wizarat. They also had a number of minor departments working under their supervision with more specific functions. These included, for instance, the *Mustaufi-i-Mumalik* [Auditor General, incharge of expenditure], *Mushrif-i-Mumalik* [Accountant General, incharge of income] and the *Majmuadar* [keeper of loans and balances from treasury]. With the passage of time, however, the complexities of the greatly enlarged geographical territory saw further streamlining and introduction of new offices which were monitored by the wazir and wizarat. These included the *Diwan-i-Waqoof* [introduced by Jalaluddin Khalaji to supervise expenditure *only*; i.e, after separating ‘income’ records from ‘expenditure’ records]; *Diwan-i-Mustakhraj* [set up by Alauddin Khalaji to enquire into and realise arrears of revenue payments from the different parts of the empire]; and the *Diwan-i-Amir Kohi* [under Muhammad bin Tughlaq, this department was responsible for bringing uncultivated land into cultivation through state support].

The *wazir* and the *Diwan-i-Wizarat* were thus the most important and trusted offices of the empire. This was also evident from the fact that the wazir was one of the very few persons who had direct access to the ruler and, according to Ibn Battuta, stood closest to the sultan at court. It was on the wazir’s wisdom, sagacity, sincerity and loyalty that the position and success of the sultan was greatly dependent.

19.7.2 *Diwan-i-Arz*

But the sultan and the wazir together could do little without the help of the army, the most important component of political rule in pre-modern times. It was the army which helped the sultan to conquer new areas, protect his own kingdom, and maintain order within the empire. The *Diwan-i-Arz* was instituted especially to look after the military organisation of the empire. It was headed by the *Ariz-i-Mumalik*. With the Delhi Sultanate always having a large military entourage, this ministry was very important in the empire. The *Ariz*, along with his office, maintained the royal contingents, recruited the soldiers, ensured the discipline and fitness of the army, examined the horses and branded them with the royal insignia. During times of war, the *Ariz* arranged the military provisions, transportation and administered the army at war, provided constant supplies, and was the custodian of war booty. The importance of his position, and that of the army, is evident from the fact that in later times the *Ariz* could actually reward individual soldiers by increasing their salaries. Alauddin Khilji introduced the system of *dagh* (branding) and *huliyah* (description) and cash payment to soldiers. This was meant to strengthen his control over the army.

Firuz Tughlaq did away with the system of *dagh* and *huliyah* however Muhammad Tughlaq continued the system of *dagh*. Under Sikandar Lodi *huliyah* was referred to as *chehrah*.

19.7.3 *Naib-Ul-Mulk*

Next in line, and in part attached to the earlier office, was that of the *Naib*. Theoretically, the *Naib* was the deputy of the *Ariz*, and was supposed to assist him in his many administrative chores; however, as the example of Ghiyasuddin Balban [*naib* of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, and later to become sultan] shows, sometimes the *Naib* could become more important than the *wazir*. But these were exceptions rather than the rule, dependent more on individual personalities and circumstances. It does however indicate the possibility of ambitious individuals to use the exceptional practice to their advantage.

19.7.4 *Diwan-i-Insha*

Royal authority was conducted to a fair degree through declarations, announcements, *farmans*, and the like. The *Diwan-i-Insha*, headed by the *Dabir-i-Khas*, looked after the department of royal correspondence. He drafted and despatched royal orders, and

received reports from officers in various parts of the empire. This reflected the diplomatic perspective which conveyed in carefully chosen language the commands of the ruler. The *Dabir* was the formal channel of communication between the centre and the other areas of the empire, and at a time when transport and communication was underdeveloped, the job was made more difficult. The *Dabir* was also the private secretary of the sultan, responsible for writing the *farmans* [except in the reign of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq when the office lost its importance].

19.7.5 *Diwan-i-Riyasat*

During the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalaji, the *Diwan-i-Riyasat* became very prominent. Alauddin's market regulations required constant surveillance; this ministry registered all the supplies of commodities, and maintained standards in the markets [such as checking weights and measures, etc]. With the collapse of the market regulations after Alauddin's death, this department also faded out of prominence.

19.7.6 *Diwan-i-Risalat and Diwan-I-Qada*

It was headed by the *Sadr-us-Sadr* who was also the *Qadi-i-mumalik* and was responsible for administration of justice and also looked after the religious matters as *sadr-us-sadr*. *Diwan-i-Qada* was placed under a *Qadi-i-mumalik*. He was incharge of religious and legal matters. Local *qadis* (judges) were chosen by him. In the time of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq the complaints of the people were registered with the *Diwan-i-Risalat*.

19.7.7 *Diwan-i-Mazalim*

It was headed by the *Amir-i-Dad* in the absence of the Sultan. His role was to supervise the *qadis*, *kotwal* (police) and *muhtasib* (Executive officer who supervised and enforced the public morals and public conveniences).

19.7.8 Smaller Departments

Apart from these, there were a number of smaller 'departments' at the centre which helped in the every day administration of the empire. They were usually supervised directly by the sultan. Important amongst them were those dealing with intelligence [like the *Barid-i-Mumalik*], the royal household [headed by the *Wakil-i-Dar*], court ceremonies [led by the *Amir-i-Hajib*], royal bodyguards [under the *Sar-i-Jandar*]. Other important departments looked after slaves, royal workshops [*karkhanas*]; and important royal slaves also performed various functions such as bearing the royal parasol, serving wine, etc.

19.8 PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Administration in areas, which were outside the core political area, was conducted in a number of ways, depending on the degree of political control which was exercised over the area. In the initial years of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, especially after the accession of Shamsuddin Iltutmish, many other slave-governors [Bahauddin Tughril in Bayana, Nasiruddin Qabacha in Multan] asserted their independence. The political turmoil that followed [and which continued for the better part of the next 30 years after the death of Iltutmish] meant that the sultan's attentions were concentrated on stabilising the political base of the sultanate, especially when tensions were both from within [other slave-governors; recalcitrant notables] as well as from outside [other indigenous rulers; Mongols]. As the empire expanded, newly annexed areas became loosely affiliated to the politico-administrative structure, often through nominal recognition of the political supremacy of the sultan/centre. A few officials were appointed by the centre to these

areas as a symbol of imperial presence, but every day administration most often remained in local hands. The interest of the centre in these areas was mostly economic, i.e., collection of revenue to sustain the larger imperial edifice.

19.8.1 Position of Governor of the Province

Sultanate comprised of provinces placed in charge of governors called *wali* or *muqti*. In the 14th century with the consolidation of the sultanate the provinces became unmanageable and were therefore, partitioned into *shiqs* for administrative convenience. They were administrated by the *shiqdars*. Subsequently the *shiqs* got transformed into *sarkars* in the Afghan period. The *sarkar* as a territorial unit comprised of a number of *paraganas*.

In spite of the complicated web of authority and power the administration of the outer areas was often nebulous. Usually, the sultan appointed a governor as his deputy, who was responsible for the overall administration of the area. This involved ensuring the collection of revenue, maintaining law and order, and keeping opposition to central authority under control. He was the chief executive officer deputed by the centre, and embodied the sultans's administrative power in the provinces of the kingdom. Since the official was a newcomer to the region, he was usually dependent on the local officials [whose offices had been in existence prior to the establishment of the Sultanate] to execute his duties, along with his own military retinue. Often, a part of the revenue collected went towards the governor's own salary [which included the maintenance of his army]; so it was in the interest of the governor to ensure the proper and timely collection of revenue. A part of it was sent to the central treasury. In such cases, land was allotted to the governor as his '*iqta*, and the governor was variously called *malik*, *amir*, *muqti* or *iqtadar*'.

A significant component of the '*iqtadar*'s duties was the maintenance of a military unit under his command. This was important because he could be called upon to muster his army at any point to help the sultan in battles. Thus, the armies of these governors acted as reserve platoons of the central army. The same was expected from the local *rajars* as well, since they had accepted the suzerainty of the sultan. The governor was helped in these military duties by the *Ariz* who looked after the military contingents under the supervision of the governor. The *Ariz* was placed under the *Ariz-i-Mumalik*.

Thus, the governor and the local power-blocs worked in close association with each other, which, consequently, generated other problems for the sultan at the centre. Being at a distance from the centre gave these governors the opportunity to liaise with the local power groups and rise in rebellion against the sultan at the centre. This was a frequent occurrence, and on such occasions the sultan himself or some trusted official from the centre was sent to suppress the rebellion.

The office of the governor could therefore be used for political gain. Even if the sultan was helpless in containing the attempts by the governors to usurp power in the provinces, he would [very rarely] accept the use of the title of 'sultan' by the governor: the example of Bughra Khan in Bengal during the reign of Sultan Balban is a case in point. Conversely, if a particular notable was very powerful in a particular area [or at the court in the capital] then the sultan could appoint him as governor of a distant province to remove him from his position of popularity and power. The historian Ziya Barani informs us that when Zafar Khan became very renowned as the governor of Samana, Sultan Alauddin Khalaji began to think of transferring him to Lakhnauti [Bengal] to uproot him from his power base and thereby weaken his growing strength.

19.8.2 Local Administration: Role of *Khots*, *Zamindars*, *Rais*, *Ranas*, etc.

A number of villages formed a **pargana** (this term becomes common in the 14th century and is Indian in origin). The villages were under the administrative supervision of the

following set of officials: *muquddam* (the village head man); *patwari* (village accountant); *khut* (village headman). It is important to note that the village and pargana were independent units of administration, and yet inter-related areas over which officials commanded administrative powers. The important pargana officials were *chaudhary* (highest local rural magnate accountable to the government for land revenue collection), *mutasarrif* or *amil* (revenue collector) and *karkun* (accountant).

Khot, *Muqaddam*, *Patwari* and *Choudhary* were the local officials who worked in conjunction with the governor in the collection of revenue and maintaining law and order, etc. Before the Bengal Expedition in 1353 Firuz Tughlaq in his proclamation suggested that *zamindars* constituted the *muqaddams*, *mafrozis* and *maliks* (*Insha-i-mahru*, letters of the early years of Firuz Tughlaq's reign). Thus the word *zamindar* encompassed the entire superior rural class. In certain cases the province also had a local ruler [*rai*, *rana*, *rawat*, *raja*] who supported the governor in his duties. In such instances, the local rulers were usually recognised by the sultan at the centre as being his subordinate, albeit the local rulers were allowed to act as sovereign powers in conducting the administrative affairs of the region. This practice was adopted in the Delhi sultanate because it allowed the sultanate to expand geographically on the basis of nominal sovereignty, coupled with an assured financial contribution to the central treasury.

19.8.3 Other Officers: *Shiqdar*, *Faujdar*, *Amil*, etc.

The other important officers in the provinces — those who had direct access to the sultan — were the *barids* [intelligence officers and reporters]. They played a very significant role in the reporting of local developments to the sultan, and were usually appointed directly by the sultan. These officers were the sultan's 'eyes and ears' in the outer realms, and acted as an important check on the governors.

Ziya Barani mentions two other officers — the *shiqdar* and the *faujdar* — at the provincial level. *Shiqdar* is mentioned during Alauddin Khalji's period. Barani also refers to *shiqdar* and *faujdar* during Mohammad Tughlaq's reign. Their duties are not very clearly articulated, and often the role of the two seems to overlap. The *shiqdar* was in charge of a *shiq*, and assisted the governor in the maintenance of law and order [particularly criminal justice] and provided military assistance, especially if it was required in the collection of land revenue, or the suppression of local rebellions. His salary seems to have been derived from the revenue collections of the area [though we have no direct evidence to prove it] and it was a fairly stable office since we find mention of it even during the Lodi period and onwards. The *shiqdar's* duties also included supervising the functioning of the smaller administrative units such as the *pargana*. The duties of the *faujdar* were much similar to that of the *shiqdar*, yet they seem to have existed simultaneously. In most cases, the *shiqdar* was superior to the *faujdar* though this seems to have been reversed in the period of the Saiyyids. In the Tughlaq period in the deccan, *shiq* was bigger than a district. Smaller *shiqs* are also mentioned under the Tughlaqs. *Shiqdar* was assisted by the *faujdar*s in maintaining law and order during the Tughlaq period. The *kotwal* was placed under the *faujdar*. Under the Lodis the *shiqdar* was the *pargana* or city officer who were responsible for both civil and military administration.

The *shiqdar* and *faujdar* were helped in carrying out their duties by a host of other local officials including the *Qazi* [dealt mostly with civil cases and acted as a jurisconsult since he was educated in the Quran], *Amil* [primarily responsible for the collection of revenue], *Amin* [carried out measurement of land in the reign of Sikandar Lodi as mentioned in the sources (Waq'at-i-Mushtaqi, late 16th century) and *Kotwal* [an office of varying importance, he was under the *shiqdar/faujdar*, and helped in the maintenance of law and order].

The financial accounts of the provincial income and expenditure were maintained by the *Sahib-i-Diwan*, who was appointed by the sultan on the recommendation of the

wazir. He was the book-keeper of provincial revenue, and was assisted in his task by *mutassarifs* and *karkuns*. The nazir and waqf were officers who looked after the collection of the revenue and expenditure respectively.

We also find mention of the office of the *Khwaja* (probably same as *Sahib-i-Diwan*), who kept a record of the income of the *iqta*, on the basis of which the sultan was able to make his revenue demands. The *Khwaja* was also appointed by the sultan on the recommendation of the *wazir*. This office was important because the agricultural produce of the entire sultanate was never uniform, and so the taxation system and demand were different for different parts of the sultanate depending on the yield of different areas.

19.9 ARMY ORGANISATION

The contingents stationed at Delhi was called Hasham-i-qalb and included among others royal slaves and guards. Provincial contingents were called *hasham-i-atraf*. Garisons are mentioned in the time of Qutbuddin Aibak which were placed under Kotwals. Cavalry was composed of *murattab*, *sawar* and *do-aspah* (men with 2 horses, single horse and no horses of their own respectively) (*The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, I.H. Qureshi, p. 250-253). Elephant establishment at Delhi was supervised by the *Shahnah-i-fil*. The infantry or foot soldiers were referred to as *paiks* (generally Hindus, slaves or persons of low origin). The decimal system (multiples of 10) was the basis of army organisation under the Ghaznavids and Mongols. Sultans of Delhi followed a similar system. Barani in his *Tarikh-I-Firoz Shahi* discusses the army organisation, “A *sarkhail* commands 10 chosen horsemen; a *sipah-salar* 10 *sarkhails*; an amir 10 *sipha-salars*; a *malik* 10 amirs, a khan 10 maliks, and a king should have at least 10 khans under his command”, (Medieval India Quarterly, M. Habib, p 228.) Barani also refers to *amiran-i-sada* (centurians) and *amiran-i-hajara* (commanders of one thousand). The hierarchy comprised of Sarkhail at the bottom (with 10 horse men subordinate to him), a sipah-salar (had 10 sarkhail under him), amir (10 sipah-salars below him), malik (had power over 10 amirs), Khan’s troops (were equal to troops under 10 maliks).

Barani in *Tarikh-I-Firoz Shahi* says that Muhammad Tughlaq told the governor of Dhar (Malwa) ‘ I hear that everyone who rebels does so owing to the support of the amiran-i-sadah (Sadah amirs: commanders of one hundred) and the amiran-i-sadah support him owing to their anger (at the imperial policy) and love of plunder.’ Medieval India Quarterly, Prof. M. Habib, p.288.

The *masalik-ul-absar* (An Arabic source of the 14th century) gives an estimate of the salaries of officers: Khan: 1 lakh tankhas, malik: 50 to 60 thousand tankhas, etc. Soldiers were directly paid in cash by the central government during the time of Khaljis and Tughlaqs. The nobles were given assignments of revenue in lieu of salary. The standing army comprised of regular troops called *wajhis* and irregular called *ghair wajhis*. Sometimes soldiers were also paid through *itlaq* (drafts).

19.10 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Since the economy in the Indian subcontinent was predominantly agrarian, the primary source of income for the state was land revenue. States from ancient times had taxed the farmer on their produce, and appropriated a portion of it as tax/revenue to sustain the larger state structures. With the passage of time, the machinery of tax collection had crystallised in different parts of the subcontinent. Therefore, as the sultans expanded the frontiers of the sultanate, they were able to utilise the existing administrative machinery for their purposes.

The primacy of agriculture in the economy meant that the village remained the basic unit of administration in the Delhi sultanate. According to Irfan Habib “To begin with, it would seem that there was little question of the peasants claiming property rights over any parcel of land. Land was abundant, and the peasant could normally put up with a denial of his right over the land he tilled. What he feared, on the contrary, was a claim of the superior classes over his crop, and more still over his person”. (*The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Irfan Habib and T.R. Choudhary (eds.), Vol.I, p. 54.) The state held large tracts of land [khalisa] which were tilled by farmers maintained by the centre and from where all the revenue came to the central treasury through the agency of officials called *amil*s. But the largest part of the land was distributed as iqta within the sultanate. The centre’s policy of revenue collection reached its highest of one-half of the produce during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, who had adopted the policy of actual measurement of land [called *hukm-i misahat*] where land was measured and revenue demand determined on its anticipated yield.

Since the time of the Ghaznavid conquest of India *Kharaj* was an important source of revenue. *Jizya* too was exacted from non-muslims. *Zakat* was probably also imposed. The Ghorids also adopted the Ghaznavid practice when they conquered India. Muizzuddin Ghori appointed governors who were in charge of civil and military administration in various parts of India. Slowly and steadily an administrative apparatus began to develop on the pattern of the Ghaznavids which also bore the imprint of local traditions and customs.

The taxation principles followed by the Delhi Sultan were to some extent based on the Hanafi School of Muslim Law. The revenue was broadly categorized into two by the Muslim Jurists: *Fay* and *Zakat*. *Fay* was further subdivided into *Khams*, *Jizya* and *Kharaj*. *Zakat* comprised of tax on flocks, herds, gold, silver, commercial capital, agricultural produce, etc. *Khams* represented one fifth of the booty acquired in war or mine or treasure trove (found) to be handed over to the state. *Jizya* was imposed on non-muslims “in return for which they received protection of life and property and exemption from military services”. (R.P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 339) *Kharaj* was the tax on land. Initially this tax was not levied on muslims however due to the need of the state for revenue it was later not practical to give immunity to muslims from the payment of this tax. Theoretically, the holders of *Kharaj* land were to pay land tax whether land was cultivated by them or not. The Muslim law and state followed a liberal policy towards the land holders and they could not be evicted easily and the state tried to encourage cultivation by giving them loans. These theoretical postulates got modified in actual practice in the Delhi Sultanate.

Agrarian taxation in the Delhi Sultanate

As already suggested the Muslim theory of taxation was adopted in India with modifications. We get proper information about the taxation system from the period of Alauddin Khalji. Barani in his *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* gives a description of Alauddin Khalji’s agrarian policy in North India’. “The sultan decreed that 3 taxes were to be levied on the peasants viz. the *Kharaj* (also called *Kharaj-I-jizya*) or tax on cultivation; *charai*, a tax on milch cattle; and *ghari* (a tax on houses). As for *Kharaj*, all who engaged in cultivation whether of lands of large or of small extent were to be subject to (the procedure of) measurement (*masahat*) and (the fixation of) the yield per biswa (*wafa-I-biswa*) and were without any exception to pay half”. (Irfan Habib and T.R. Choudhary (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India, Volume I*, p. 61). It seems that generally tax was collected in cash though it was sometimes also collected in kind for specific purposes. An important consequence of Alauddin Khalji’s tax administration was that *Kharaj* or *mal* henceforth became the main source through which revenue was exacted from the peasants by the ruling class. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq introduced changes in the earlier policy and tried to win over the peasants and village headmen by providing relief measures (exemption from additional levies, tax on cattle, etc.).

Under Muhammad Tughlaq the whole of India including Gujarat, Malwa, Deccan, South India and Bengal were brought under a monolithic taxation system. Barani points out that *abwab* (additional cesses) were imposed on the peasants. The three taxes: *ghari*, *charai*, and *Kharaj* were strictly levied. There was thus increase in agrarian taxation. *Kharaj* was now calculated on standard yield and not actual yield of measured land for assessment in kind. For obtaining the assessment in cash instead of actual prices officially laid down prices were applied. Thus the demand rose. These measures resulted in agrarian distress. Around this time famine hit Delhi and the Doab. Muhammad Tughlaq tried to provide relief by giving the peasants *Sondhar* (agrarian loans) for encouraging cultivation through various means. Firoz Tughlaq reversed Muhammad Tughlaq's policy and many agrarian levies (*abwab*, *ghari* and *charai*) were discontinued. However, *Jizya* was imposed as a separate tax. Careful examination tells us that *Jizya* was closer to *ghari* since it was a levy on the head of the house. Firoz also imposed water tax on the villages which utilized the canals and it was one tenth of the produce. During the period of the Lodis land tax was collected in kind due to the declining price situation.

Grants (*Iqta*, *Milk*, *Idrar*)

Iqta was grant of land made from *Kharaj* land to officers called *Muqti*. *Iqta* was not hereditary and did not entitle the *Muqti* the right of ownership. They could be transferred and revoked by the Sultans. *Jizya* revenue of *Iqta* was assigned yearly whereas non *Jizya* revenue was granted for many years. The *Muqti* was assigned the duty of collecting the revenue and utilizing it for maintaining troops for the Sultan. The *Muqti* did sub allot smaller *Iqtas* for maintaining their troops. The surplus collected from *Iqta* was required to be sent to the central treasury.

Tusi (a Seljukid statesman of 11th century) in *Siyasat nama* gives the classical description of the *iqta* as follows “*Muqtis* who hold *iqtas* should know that they have no claim on the subjects/peasants (*riaya*) other than that of collecting from them in a proper manner the due mal (tax, land tax) that has been assigned to them (the *muqtis*). When the revenue has been realised from them, those subjects/peasants should remain secure from (any demands by) them (the *muqtis*) in respect of their persons, wealth, wives and children, cultivated lands (*ziya*) and goods. The *muqtis* do not have any (further) claims on them. The subjects/peasants, if they so wish, can come to the (king's) court and represent their condition. They should not be prevented from doing so. If any *muqti* does anything other than this they (the kings) take away his power (literally, cut away his hands) and resume his *iqta* and visit their wrath on him, so that others might be warned thereby. They (the *muqtis*) should in truth realise that the country and peasantry (*raiyat*), all belong to the sultan, with the *muqtis* (simply) placed at their head”. (The Cambridge Economic History, I. Habib)

During Balban's reign an attempt was made to enquire into the income of *Muqtis*. An important change took place in Alauddin Khalji's period. With the expansion of the Empire far off areas were assigned in *Iqta* and the areas closer to Delhi were brought under *Khalisa*. The Sultan's troops were now paid in cash. This practice continued till Muhammad Tughlaq's reign. The changes in the *Iqta* administration during Alauddin Khalji's period are reflected in the following passage from Irfan Habib (*Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol.-I, pg.70). “The tax income (*Kharaj*) from each *iqta* was estimated at a particular figure by the finance department (*Diwan-i-wizarat*). The department remained on the constant look out for an opportunity to enhance the estimate. Out of the estimated income of the *iqta* a certain amount was allowed for the pay (*mawajib*) of the troops (*hasham*) placed under the *muqti* or *wali*. The area expected to yield this amount was apparently set apart by the *Diwan*. The remainder was treated as the *muqti's* own personal *iqta* i.e. for his own salary and the expense of his personal establishment of officials. He had to pay into the treasury all realization above the amount allowed for the pay of the army and for his own income”. During Ghiyasuddin

Tughlaq's time the estimated income of the *Iqta* was not raised by the finance department and the *muqtis* and other officials were allowed to appropriate for themselves small sums over and above the sanctioned income.

Under Muhammad Tughlaq the dual task of collecting revenue and maintaining soldiers was divided. The *Masalik-al-Absar* gives a detailed account of the institution of *Iqta* under Muhammad Tughlaq. It points out that "all army commanders from Khans heading 10,000 cavalry troops to *sipah salars* placed over less than 100 were assigned *iqtas* in lieu of their salaries. The estimated income of *iqta* against which the salary was adjusted was always less than the actual. The significant point is that the troops are said to have been always paid in cash by the treasury and that the *iqtas* was given only in lieu of the commanders' personal salaries". (cf. Irfan Habib and T.R. Choudhary (eds.), *Cambridge Economic History of India, Vol. I*, pg. 72). Due to his policies Muhammad Tughlaq faced problems in Deogir when the *Amiran-i-sada* (centurians) became disaffected.

Firoz Tughlaq adopted the policy of remuneration of soldiers through assignment of revenue of villages known as *wajh* (a new assignment given in lieu of salaries). In cases where soldiers were not assigned *wajh*, cash salaries were paid from the treasury or through drafts on the *iqtas* of nobles which were to be drawn through the surplus payment which were due to the central treasury from the *iqtas*. These drafts could be sold at a price to speculators. The hereditary aspect was strengthened in this period as against the transfer principle. Under the Lodis the term *iqta* was still used for areas held by *wajhdars*.

Assignments of revenue of villages or lands for lifetime to the religious intelligentsia were categorized as *milk* (proprietary rights given by state), *idrar* (pension) and *inam* (gift). Grants made for the support of religious institutions like madrasas, Khanqahs, were called *waqf* (endowments). These grants were made by the Sultan both within *Iqta* and *Khalisa* through a *farman*. Economically these grants did not have much implication.

19.11 SULTANATE: A COMPLEX COHESIVE ADMINISTRATIVE NETWORK

Despite the paucity of evidence for the Delhi Sultanate, it is possible to suggest that the central political power located in the capital city asserted political hegemony over the core areas through direct control via its officers. The sultan's presence was felt most strongly over here, and was visible not only through his physical presence, but also through the complex network of officers and military retainues which worked towards maintaining sovereign royal power. The authority of the sultan also acquired more concrete forms, especially in the construction activities which were initiated at his behest. These included architectural constructions of various types but, especially in the early phases, the building of mosques which brought the community [*ummah*] together for prayer. Through such a complex and interwoven series of symbolic and architectural activities, the newly established sultanate managed to retain its hold over a core political area and create a base for itself from where it could expand. This expansion was possible through the large army it had mustered, and whose military prowess and efficiency was kept to a level through particular offices created for the purpose. The administrative structure, along with the religious discourse of the *ulema*, therefore allowed for the creation of an obedient population upon whom sovereign political authority was exercised. This structure was kept in place through the system of the bureaucratic network established.

The same system was at work in the provinces of the sultanate, but with one important difference. Here, the central authority was exercised by a handful of officers. The internal cohesion of this body of officers was weakened by the fact that each was

appointed as a check on the other, so that they may not turn recalcitrant given that they were so far removed from the centre. Further, the governor in these areas was dependent upon local officials for carrying out many of his duties, and often the 'system' established by the Delhi Sultans was actually a continuation of the prevalent 'customs' in the area, be they regarding collection of revenue or civil and criminal arbitration (traditional practices). Too much interference had the risk of fomenting opposition, which the sultan could ill-afford; therefore, it seemed tactful to work in association with the local power groups for the fulfilment of their own interests.

These two rungs of administration, at the centre and at the provinces, included a host of officers who worked to maintain imperial power and sovereignty. Of course, there were situations in which they themselves worked against their master's interests. But otherwise, it was a system which worked well to provide a cohesion to the political structure. This was significant because at a time when there were no other common binding factors within the disparate sections and regions of the entire Delhi sultanate, administrative measures and officers provided a common imperial reference point, an imperial scaffolding which held together the entire political edifice.

Finally, the various offices and posts, the land measurement and revenue assignments and the relationship with the local power brokers, etc. laid the foundation for a more intensive and integrative bureaucratic system that was to become a defining feature of the Mughal empire from the middle of the 16th century. The administrative efficiency of the Mughals would not have been possible without the foundation of it having been laid by the Delhi Sultanate in difficult conditions.

19.12 SUMMARY

With the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate an altogether new system of administration was introduced at the top level with only minor changes at the local pargana and village level. The sultan enjoyed enormous powers not only over his subjects but also over nobles and officials. In Delhi and its immediate environs the power and authority of Sultan was most visible and it can therefore be considered as the core region. In the outlying, distant territories and provinces also the authority of Sultan prevailed but it was limited depending on the officers governing the provinces. During the initial phase of the Sultanate the nobles shared authority with the Sultan but from the time of Balban and to the period of Khalji and Tughlaq rule the Sultan emerged as all powerful. The Ulema or the learned sections had only a limited role in the administrative process.

The administrative apparatus of the Sultanate was a blend of West Asian, Central Asian and local traditions. Two distinct components emerged i.e. the central administration and provincial and local administration. The central administration was organised through various departments headed by senior nobles. The important departments were *wizarat*, *Diwan-i-arz*, *Diwan-i-insha*, *Diwan-i-riyasat*, *Diwan-i-risalat* and *Diwan-i-qada*. The provincial administration was entrusted to the governors (*Wali* or *muqti*) who worked in collaboration with the local officials and superior right holders (who had traditionally enjoyed customary rights prior to the establishment of the Sultanate). The local administration along with customary officials were allowed to continue after making minor adjustments and working out new relationships.

The most significant new institution that evolved and played an important role in effective governance was the *Iqta* system. *Iqta* was a territorial assignment given to the officials in lieu of their salaries. The holders of *iqtas* were called *muqtis* and enjoyed their position as long as the Sultan wished. They had no hereditary claim and were subject to transfer at the will of the Sultan. They were entrusted with the responsibility of collecting revenue and administering the territories assigned. They were also required to maintain a certain number of soldiers which were to be placed at the service of Sultan when needed. The holders of large territories were almost akin to provincial governor and the

nomenclature applied to them was *iqtadar*, *muqti* or *wali*.

A separate department *diwan-i-arz* looked after the organisation and supervision of army. The department maintained exclusive contingents as the Sultan's army. It also supervised the contingents of the *muqtis*.

Since land revenue was the main source of the income of the State its administration was given priority. Officials were appointed to look after assessment and collection of revenue from the lands either directly administered by the centre or assigned to *iqta* holders.

The Sultanate managed to develop a complex cohesive administrative network which could sustain it, with fluctuating actual control, for over three hundred years of its existence.

19.13 EXERCISES

- 1) Discuss the nature of the administrative apparatus of the Delhi Sultanate.
- 2) Describe the provincial and local administration under the Delhi Sultans.



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UNIT 20 VIJAYNAGAR, BAHAMANI AND OTHER KINGDOMS

18th Century Successor States

Structure

- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 Vijaynagar Central Power: King as the Monarchical Head
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- 20.15 Exercises

20.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we propose to consider the administrative and institutional structures of Vijaynagar, Bahmani and other kingdoms (viz. Bengal and Malwa). Thanks to the interest of scholars and historians who worked on the subject for several years, we have a fairly good knowledge about the Vijaynagar and Bahmani kingdoms. However, we must admit that still there are some gaps in our understanding of these areas of study. The reason for the lacunae in our knowledge about the details of administrative and institutional aspects has to be sought in the nature of the sources, including literary works and epigraphical records and the researches conducted. For the Vijayanagara state the literary works are available in two languages, Kannada and Telugu while the inscriptions are scattered over an immensely vast area in three languages – Kannada, Telugu and Tamil. Scholars proficient in one language made use of the sources available in that language with the information pertaining to that particular culture region. The language barrier prevented individual scholars from providing a comprehensive analysis taking into account all the material available on the subject. As a result there is some confusion in our knowledge of some administrative divisions and the nature and functions of some offices. Nevertheless, we will try to take into account all the available source material, to discuss the administrative and institutional aspects of the Vijayanagara and Bahmani and other Kingdoms. Scant attention has been paid by scholars to the independent sultanates which emerged as a consequence of the decline of Delhi Sultanate. Due to paucity of material dealing with these states and limitation of space in this unit, we will not be able to cover all independent states of the period. For the present discussion we have selected the Kingdom of Malwa and Bengal by the way of illustration.

20.2 VIJAYANAGAR CENTRAL POWER: KING AS THE MONARCHICAL HEAD

Vijayanagar empire was established by the sons of Sangama, Harihara and Bukka in 1336. It had its capital on the banks of river Tungbhadra. Some scholars ascribe to the theory of Telugu origin of Vijayanagar rulers, Others believe that they belonged to Karnataka. The former believe that the empire was established by Harihara I and Bukka I (the sons of Sangama) who were employed under the Kakatiya ruler. When Warangal was taken by Ulugh Khan (later Mohammad-bin-tughlaq) in 1323, they got employed under Kampildeva of Anegondi and when Anegondi was conquered by the Delhi Sultan, they were deputed there to restore order but instead they founded the Vijayanagar empire. According to one view, they were feudatories of Hoysalas and after the dissolution of Hoysala power in 1342, they emerged as their successors.

Nilakanta Sastri has observed that in theory the empire was a hereditary monarchy and the political situation within the territory and outside made it imperative that the king should possess high attainments in diplomacy and war. A weak ruler could not continue for long since there was pressure from within and outside. This resulted in usurpations by either members of the royal line or some able commander of the military force. Such a situation arose, during the reign of the weak king Mallikarjuna (1447-65), who succeeded Vijaya Raya II on the throne. Saluva Narasimha captured the throne after overthrowing the incompetent King Mallikarjuna and putting an end to the confusion and dissensions in the Kingdom. Narasimha the military commander founded the Saluva dynasty. Thus, such instances of intrigues and conspiracies were an important feature of the Vijaynagar kingship. The last ruler of Saluva dynasty was assassinated by the powerful noble and regent Vira Narasimha who laid the foundation of Tuluva or third dynasty. The most important ruler of this dynasty was Krishnadevaraya. The Aravidu dynasty began to rule over Vijayanagar in 1572. It was the fourth dynasty and this ruling house was related to Krishnadevaraya since Rama Raya an important scion of this house was Krishnadevaraya's daughter's son.

The king was advised by a council of ministers but the supreme authority was the king himself who was at liberty to accept or reject the advice of ministers. On certain occasions the king punished his most powerful ministers as in the case of Saluva Timma who was punished by Krishnadevaraya for his lapses.

The royal princes were often appointed to important official positions with a view to training them in the administration. As a result some princes became highly efficient and well versed in the state affairs. Krishnadeva Raya exemplifies this practice. He is the author of the didactic text *Amuktamalyada* in which he says:

“A King should improve the harbours of his country and so encourage its commerce that horses, elephants, precious gems, sandalwood, pearls and other articles are freely imported. He should arrange that the foreign sailors who land in his country on account of storms, illness and exhaustions are looked after in a manner suitable to their nationalities.... Make the merchants of distant foreign countries who import elephants, and good horses be attached to yourself by providing them with daily audience, presents and allowing decent profits. Then those articles will never go to your enemies” (R. Saraswati, *The Journal of Indian History*, 4, part 3, 1925). The passage shows how sympathetic the royal author was to the traders, and how sharp he was in assessing the importance of items of trade.

The King's army was stationed at the capital. The army consisted of an elephant corps, a cavalry and an infantry. There were two treasuries at the Capital, one for current remittance and withdrawal, and another, a large reserve, which was used only when the king was in great need. Every king made it a point to add something to this reserve.

20.3 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS: PROVINCES, SIME, STHALA

The territory was organised from the very beginning of the establishment of the kingdom into administrative units called rajyas or provinces. These provinces were put under *pradhanis* who were a category of superior officers. In the initial stages the *pradhanis* were princes of the royal line but later, the post was occupied by military officers. Subbarayalu informs us that the headquarter of each rajya was called uccavadi or simply cavadi which denoted a rajya and that the rajyas incorporated in them already existing divisions of *nadu*, *parru* etc. of the Tamil region. The exact number of rajyas in the Vijayanagara Kingdom has not been convincingly calculated. However it may be suggested safely that the rajyas were important administrative and revenue units. The *rajyas* ceased to serve the function of important administrative units when the *nayaka* system was established by the time of Krishnadevayara. However, the names of rajyas figure in the records even later but only as geographical names. In the later stage the headquarters of the earlier rajyas are found along with several other towns as fortified garrisons under the military officers called *amara nayakas*.

Apart from the *rajyas* there were other smaller divisions like *sime*, *sthala*, *nadu* etc. Interestingly in some records, the terms rajya and sim are used interchangeably as in the case of Terekanambi sime and Terekanambi rajya. Some of these divisions are said to be existing within another division with the same territorial nomenclature such as Kundahatta Sthala of Nagavali Sthala. These and similar epigraphical reference to such complicated nomenclature and divisions prevents us from suggesting any hierarchy of administrative divisions. It seems to be possible to observe that for administrative convenience governmental authorities introduced the peculiar nomenclature system for identifying various territorial divisions. However, the changes are an indication of the variation in the pattern of administrative machinery in different periods.

20.4 NAYAKA SYSTEM

The *Nayaka* or the *Nayankara* system which matured in the later period of the empire brought about some changes in the status of the rajyas or provinces. The *nayakas* were a category of officers appointed by the king with rights over land. Generally, it was held by scholars and historians that the *Nayakas* enjoyed control over the land held by them and so they could parcel out a part of it to others in return for some remittance of revenue and other services to the superior authority. Epigraphical records speak of different kinds of *nayakas* such as *dannayakas* (military official), *durga-dannayakas* (military official in charge of fort) and *amaranayakas*. It seems there was some hierarchical relation among them. *Durga dannaiks* were Brahman commanders in charge of strategic fortresses. The landholding allocated to the *nayakas* was called *nayakattanam*. Recently Karashima and Subbarayalu have studied the Tamil epigraphical sources of the Vijayanagara period and they have presented a more logical picture of the *nayakas* and the institution of *nayakattanam*.

Nuniz, the portuguese Chronicler had stated that there were two hundred *nayakas* in the Vijayanagara empire. Karashima refers to more than three hundred *nayakas* in the northern part of Tamil region which consisted of five rajyas and these *nayakas* are attributed to the post 1485 period. All these *nayakas* were in possession of *nayakattanam*. These chiefs controlled production in their *nayakattanam* territories by encouraging settlers including cultivators, artisans and other service groups, who on their part enjoyed some tax concessions. These *nayakas* were obliged to be present in the royal headquarters and therefore they looked after their territory through their agents or *Karyakarta*. In return for the territory received from the king the *nayakas* had to maintain troops, ready to be sent to the battlefield, in addition to remittance of a portion of revenue from their territory to their superior.

The structure of the land tenure as prevalent under the *nayaka* system seems to have taken a shape as follows: The king gave territory to a *nayaka* who distributed it in three ways. A sub-*nayaka* who received land from the *nayaka* was called *amaranayaka*. He was responsible for maintaining troops. He had to remit a fixed amount to the *nayaka*. The *nayaka* employed cultivators on the land. This land under his direct possession was called *Bhandaravada*. In Tamil, these cultivators were known as Kaniyalar while in Kannada they were called garuda praje. Often the *nayaka* gave away a portion of land to temples or some religious institution free of tax. Such grants are called *manya*. In this way, the institution of *nayakattanam* involved a system of land tenure consisting of three tenurial rights, *amaram*, *bhandaravada* and *manya*. The *amaram* land in possession of the *amaranayakas* was cultivated by employing *Kaniyalar* who engaged the *kudi*, primary cultivators as well as forced labour. The *nayakas* engaged *kaniyalar* (or *garudapraje* in Kannada) for cultivating the *bhandaravada*. These intermediaries employed *kudi* and forced labour for cultivation. The *manya* land, enjoyed by religious institutions was cultivated by the *kudis*. Generally, the *kudis* were occupant cultivators. In the *manya* tenure there were several service groups such as the accountants, the priests etc.

The discussion of the *Nayaka* system is contained in the contemporary European sources i.e. the description of Portuguese Domingo Paes and Fernao Nuniz who were contemporaries of Krishnadevaraya and Achyutraya in 16th Century. Paes account is given hereunder:

“Should any one ask what revenues the king possesses, and what his treasure is that enables him to pay so many troops, since he has so many and such great lords in his kingdom, who, the greater part of them, have themselves revenues, I answer this: These captains whom he has over these troops of his are the nobles of his kingdom; they are lords and they hold the city, and the towns and villages of the kingdom; there are captains amongst them who have a revenue of a million and a million and a half of pardaos, others a hundred thousand pardaos, others two hundred, three hundred or five hundred thousand pardaos and as each one has a revenue so the king fixes for him the number of troops he must maintain, in foot, horse and elephants. These troops are always ready for duty whenever they may be called out and whenever they may have to go; and in this way he has this million of fighting men always ready. Each of these captains labours to turn out the best troops he can get because he pays them their salaries; and (in the review of troops by Krishnaraya)...there were the finest young men possible to be seen, for in all this array I did not see a man that would act the coward. Besides maintaining these troops each captain has to make his annual payments to the king, and the king has his own salaried troops to whom he gives pay”. (Robert Sewell: *Vijayanagar A Forgotten Empire*, p. 280-1)

Nuniz points out “.....all the land belongs to the king, and from his hand the captains held it. They make it over to the husbandmen who pays nine tenths to their Lord; and they have no land of their own for the Kingdom belongs entirely to the king....”. (Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, pp. 379).

The description of Paes and Nuniz cannot be corroborated by the evidence from the inscriptions or literary sources. D. C. Sircar (*Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as revealed by Epigraphic Records*, p. 32) on the basis of his study of inscriptions analyses the *amaram* tenure. He suggests “...the *amara* tenure was similar to the allotment of land to the priest, barber, washerman, carpenter and others for the services to be received from them regularly... The *Amaranayakas* gave their lands to minor landlords on similar terms of military service just as the subordinate rulers had various grades of vassal chiefs under them”. The reassertion of Vijayanagar suzerainty in the Tamil region was again brought about under Krishnadevaraya (subjugated previously under Kumara Kampana. Saluva Narasimha etc.) and his Telegu army. This created an important transformation i.e. the substitution of the pattern of governors (mahamandalesvaras) by four military commanders, *nayakas* to function according to

the wishes of the king with the help of the dependent warriors called *palaiyagars*. The penetration of Telegu warriors to Tamil country resulted in the emergence of chiefs who were either Telegus or Tamils in collaboration with Telegus. The study of inscriptions of the Vijaynagar period upto 1530 enabled Krishnaswami to conclude that there were a large number of *Nayakas* in Tamil Country. These inscriptions belong to the category of gifts to temples, refer to building of tanks etc., collection of taxes from temples.

Referring to *Nayakas* as pillars of support for the kings who at times also rebelled against them, Burton Stein says “When his brother the great Krishnaraya died, Achyuta’s position was secured against the powerful Aliya Ramaraya, a brother in law of the late king, by two of Achyuta’s own brothers in law: Pedda and Chinna Salakaraju. The Salakaraju brothers continued to serve Achyuta as among his most successful and reliable generals as did another brother in law Cevappa *Nayaka*.The Brahman commander and minister Saluva Narasimha *Nayaka* or Sellappa who, with the Salakaraju brothers, assured the Vijaynagar throne to Achyuta in A.D. 1529 was rewarded with the control of Tanjore, the richest territory in the empire. Sellappa revolted against Achyuta in A.D. 1531 in alliance with the other *nayakas* of the south. The reasons for this revolt appear to have been differences with Aliya Ramaraya; Sellappa had thwarted RamRaya’s ambitions to the throne at the death of Krishnaraya and was now being made to pay for that by the still powerful Ram Raya” (Peasant, state and society in medieval South India, Burton Stein, p. 399 and 400)

Venkataramaraya in his book, (*Studies in the history of the Third dynasty of Vijayanagar*, pp 171-172), suggests, “The nayankara system has no doubt strong affinities to feudalism but it has also many differences. ...land was held immediately or mediately of the emperor on condition of military service”. The concept of fealty and homage did not exist and therefore it is characterised as a military system under a central power. Krishnaswami in his work, (*The Tamil country under Vijayanagar*, p. 181), points out, “.....this *nayankara* system of the feudal arrangements in the Tamil Country seems to have been in existence from the time of the conquest of the region by Kumara Kampana.” In his earliest work (*Further Sources of Vijayanagar history*, V. 3, p. 299,) N. K. Sastri distinguishes between the *nayakas* before 1565 and after 1565 thus: “The *nayakas* who were absolutely dependent upon royal will... (until 1565) acquired a status of semi-independence”. Sastri in his book (*History of South India*, pp. 296-7) says that “.... Crown lands, annual tributes from feudatories and provincial governors..... military fiefs studded the whole length and the breadth of the empire, each under a nayak or military leader authorized to collect revenue and administer a specified area provided he maintained an agreed number of elephants, horses, and troops ever ready to join the imperial forces in war”. In a recent study (*Sources of Indian history*, p. 79), N. K. Sastri has pointed out, “.....The empire is best looked upon as a military confederacy of many chieftains cooperating under the leadership of the biggest among them”. According to Burton Stein, (*Peasant state and society in Medieval India*, p. 408) “*Nayaka* authority in Tamil country certainly hastened or perhaps even completed the demise of those local institutions which together provided each locality segment of the Chola state with basic coherence: the local body of *nattars* acting corporately through their territorial assembly, the *nadu* or, latterly, combined with other locality bodies in the greater *nadu*, the *periyannadu*; brahmadeyas acting as the ritual and ideological cores of each locality”. He further points out, (B. Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India*, p. 409) “Telegu *nayakas* quickly became locality figures in their own right, encouraging the settlement of other Telegus to strengthen their control over local Tamil and Karnataka chiefs as well as to buttress their relations with the distant but still intimidating power of the Rayas”.

N. Karashima in his work (*A Concordance of Nayakas*, p. 16), points out that the “*nayaka* system... was established as a ruling system in the Vijayanagar kingdom during the last quarter of the fifteenth century and continued till the first quarter of the seventeenth century. This is supported by the appearance of the term *nayakkattanam*, meaning territory given to a nayak, from Krishnadevaraya’s reign Although we

have one stray reference to some *nayaka*'s sirmai bestowed by Bupparasar in 1442, most of the references to *nayakattanam* or sirmai come from the reigns of Krishnadevaraya and Achyutdevraya, and therefore there is no doubt that the *nayaka* system was well established and functioned satisfactorily during the first half of the sixteenth century. Even after the defeat of Rakshasi-Tangadi in 1565, which led to a political situation of the weaker kings vis-à-vis strong *nayakas*, we have references to the bestowal of *nayakattanam* on some *nayakas* by Sriranga (1572-85) and Venkata (1586-1614)."

Nuniz (Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 370) gives a list of *nayakas* and the sum which they remitted to state treasury and writes: "In this way the kingdom of Bisnaga is divided between more than two hundred captains who are all heathen, and according to the lands and revenues that they have so the king settles for them the forces that they are compelled to keep up, and how much revenue they have to pay him every month (year?) during the first nine days of the month of September". B. Stein, (*Vijayanagar*, p. 61) however, points out "... while it is true that revenue from much of agriculture is in cash, as were inland customs and dues extracted from merchants and artisans, there is no evidence that this money or much of it is found its way to Vijaynagar and the treasury of the kings". Although Nuniz refers to King's (central) officials who were entrusted with the task of assessing and collecting revenue but Stein denies the existence of such officials.

Karashima in his work, (*A Concordance of Nayakas*), refers to 3 levels of tax authorities: king, *nayakas* and *nattavars*. *Jodi* and *sulavari* (imposed on temples) were the king's responsibility. *Pattadai-nulayam* (an important revenue item) and *Kanikkai* were remitted by *nayakas*. *Nattu-viniyogan* and *nattu-Kanikkai* (*nadu* or *nattavar* level taxes) were remitted by *nattavar*. However, *nayakas* were also made responsible for remitting other taxes (*jodi*, *sulavari* and *nattavar* level taxes) by the king and *nattavars*. Nobuhiro Ota in his work *State and Kinship in Early Modern South India*, mentions revenue records called *raya-rekha* which contained information of the amount of tax collected by Vijaynagar kings from the villages. It has not been conclusively established by scholars whether the office of *Nayakas* was transferable or not.

20.5 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION: AYAGAR SYSTEM

Scholars like T.V. Mahalingam were of the view that during the Vijayanagara rule the village administration was organised in the form of the 'ayagar system'. According to this system every village was a separate unit. Twelve functionaries, collectively known as 'ayagars' were appointed by the government in each village and once allotted, the office became hereditary. The ayagar could sell or mortgage their office. Tax free lands or *manyas* were granted to them for their maintenance for perpetuity. Regarding their payments, Col. Wilks writes that "they received the compensation of their labour either in allotment of land from the corporate stock or in fees consisting of fixed proportion of the crop of every farmer in the village" (*Historical Sketches of Mysore*, I p.73). What is noteworthy in this description of village functionaries is the fact that they are referred to as having been "appointed by the Government". The term ayagar is only rarely found in Kannada inscriptions as noted by Subbarayalu and it is not found in Tamil inscriptions. However it may be noted that the village functionaries of the so called "ayagar system" carried out the economic activities in the local communities. The question is whether it was a system and if so, whether it was introduced during the Vijayanagara rule. Inscriptional evidence has not been found to support the view that the "system" was introduced during the Vijayanagara period.

Burton Stein (*Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, p.373) raises an important question "...whether 'local institutions' continued to flourish during the Vijaynagar period as they had, especially in Tamil country, prior to that time". Saletore,

(*Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire*), based his study on Karnataka during the Vijayanagar period and suggests “Purvamariyade (ancient constitutional usage)”, continued under the Vijayanagar rulers as earlier. Scholars who have analysed Vijayanagar polity at the pinnacle of territorial expansion (when Tamil areas were subjugated) viz. K. V. Subramanya Aiyar, Nilkantha Sastri and T. V. Mahalingam and A. Krishnaswamy refer to the transformation in the functioning of local institutions like Ur, Sabha and *Nadu* in Tamil areas due to the prevalence of *Nayaka* tenure. Stein agrees with the proposition of Sastri, Mahalingam etc.

Burton Stein, (*Peasant, State and Society*, p. 423), suggests that “*ayagars*, the body of village servants displaced villages of the Chola period (Sabha and Ur) as the local management institutions”. Krishnaswami (*Tamil Country under Vijayanagar*, p. 103) states that “the introduction of the Nayankara and Ayagar systems in the provincial and local spheres by the Vijayanagar rulers brought about the decline and disappearance of the local institutions in the Tamil country”. Ayagars constituted important official functionaries like headman (maniyam, reddy or gauda), accountant (karnam, senabhova) and watchman (Talaiyari). They held rights over tax free plots of village land (*Manya*) from which a part of village income was given to them. But they might have paid a quit rent (rent paid in lieu of income share received as rights over tax free land). The other village servants potter, blacksmith, carpenter etc. who did not perform administrative functions but performed essential services for the village were also given income shares. These Income shares were called *umbali*, *kodage* and *srotriya*. These income shares from agricultural production were not taxed but served as payments for other services performed. Payments in kind were referred to as *danyadaya* and those in money were called *suvarndaya*, *kasu kadamai*.

20.6 CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Recent studies of the Vijayanagara polity have pointed out that there were some structural changes as noticed in the transformation of a system of administration based on center, provinces and an officialdom comprising of (Mahamandaleshwar and Mahapradhani) Governors, Generals (*Dandnayaka*) and revenue officers (*adhikari*) in the 14th – 15th centuries to the *nayaka* rule of the 16th century. In the earlier phase, the revenue was remitted to the respective rajya headquarters. In the *nayakattanam* territories *nayakas* directly controlled revenue administration. A network of officers for keeping accounts and for assessing the land revenue and collecting revenue were under his control. Inscriptions of the *nayaka* phase refer to rates of different taxes on crops, crafts and households. Subbarayalu informs us that the total revenue assessment, called *rekha* (*rekai* in Tamil) of individual villages is found mentioned in several inscriptions. Karashima points out that the *Nattavars* played an important role in the local production system and administration. However, under *Nayakas* they lost the eminence they had enjoyed under the Cholas. In this period ayagar system came into existence. Karashima (*Concordance of Nayakas*, p. 53) suggests, “The *Nattavar* or *Nattar* of this period need not always be taken to be the leading landholders of a certain territory but there seems to be little doubt that they had certain rights to the land through the office which they held in local administration and obtained an allotted portion of income from the land”. *Nattar* now included apart from Vellala landholders (non-Brahmin community), Reddis and Settis also. The change in the composition of the land holding class is attributed to the immigration of people to the new regions conquered by Vijayanagar armies in the 15th century. The migrants acquired land through purchase, lease etc. in the locality.

Regarding the mode of collection of revenue (various taxes) it has been suggested by scholars (like Nilkanth Sastri) that the practice of tax-farming existed. This has not yet been ascertained by the supporting evidence of inscriptions. However, Nuniz has an interesting reference to the annual payment the *nayakas* made to the king. Burton

Stein does not accept the view that the royal officials existed who sent the tax collection to the central treasury. In the earlier phase *adhikaris* existed however later *nayakas* directly conducted revenue administration. Karshima however refers to three categories of tax collecting authorities viz. king, *nayaka* and *nattavar*.

More recently another change is suggested for the last phase of the Vijayanagara and its immediate successors (*Nayaka* states). According to this view, a new layer of mercantile entrepreneurs became politically important. These groups of intermediary level of the power structure had their involvement in long distance trade, revenue – farming etc. Recent scholars like Sanjay Subramaniam describe this group as ‘portfolio capitalists’. Whether such developments could be traced to the heyday of the Vijayanagara is a problem to be investigated further.

20.7 ESTABLISHMENT OF BAHAMANI KINGDOM: BACKGROUND

The Deccani amirs had become refractory. Their insurrections could not be quelled and they laid the foundation of an independent kingdom. According to H. K. Sherwani, (*The Bahamanis of the Deccan*, p. 28) “The new kingdom became the center not only of the nobles of the Deccan but of the amirs of Baroda and Dabhoi in Gujarat as well, and the first thing the new government did was to redivide the jagirs and iqtas in the Maharashtra provinces among the new masters of the country.” The Deccani amirs selected one amongst themselves as their sultan.

Alauddin Hasan established the Bahamani dynasty. The organisation of administration under the Bahamanis was initiated by Muhammad I. To consolidate his position in the region Alauddin Hasan subdued those who favoured Tughlaq rule and tried to win over the local chiefs. Let us now review the administrative system in the Deccan under the Tughlaqs and highlight the changes introduced under the Bahamanis.

Under the Tughlaqs the Deccan provinces or *aqalim* were subdivided to *shiqs* (rural districts) and urban districts (*madinas* or *Shahrs*). The *shiqs* were further subdivided into *hazaris* (1000 villages) and *sadis* (100 villages). The officer in charge of province was wali whereas *shiq* was placed under *shiqdar*, *sadis* were governed by *amiran-I-sadah*. *Amils*, *mutasarrif* (pargana level revenue collector), *karkun* (pargana official, accountant), *patwari* (village accountant), *chowdhary* (pargana level rural magnate accountable for land revenue collection) were other provincial and local officials. The provincial governor was invested with considerable power and though he owed his position to the sultan he enjoyed some measure of autonomy in the provinces. He had a large retinue of provincial officials manning the judiciary, army and other departments. The revenue obtained from the provinces was sent to the central treasury after making provisions for provincial expenditure.

The *amiran-i-sadah* comprised the military commanders responsible for revenue collection. They became dissatisfied with Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq and laid the foundation of the independent Bahamani kingdom in the Deccan. The policy of Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq to pay the troops directly through the central treasury in cash and to give the commanders iqtas whose income was adjusted against the commanders’ personal salaries caused resentment among the commanders.

20.8 ORGANISATION OF ADMINISTRATION

Alauddin Hasan Bahman founded the kingdom in 1347. The new ministers and officials in the period of Alauddin Hasan Bahman Shah were *wakil-I-mutlaq* (Prime Minister), *amir-ul-umara* (commander in chief of army), *Barbek* (king’s private secretary), *Hajib-*

I-Khas (Lord chamberlain), *Sar pardar* (master of ceremonies) etc. In due course many other offices were created and an elaborate administrative system came into existence. Muhammad I is credited with organising the administrative and institutional structures.

The king stood at the pinnacle of the administrative system. He was assisted by a host of officials for discharging his duties viz. *Wakil* (Prime Minister), *Wazir* (Minister), *Dabir* (Secretary), *Sarhaddar* (Warden of Marches), *Qiladar* (Commander of Fortresses), *Bakshi* (paymaster), *Qazi* (Judge), *Mufti* (interpreter of law), *kotwal* (police), *Muhtasib* (censor of public morals) etc. These offices bear striking resemblance to the administrative structure of Delhi Sultanate. Several other officers are also mentioned in this period viz. *Barbak* (king's private secretary), *Hajib-I-khas* (Lord Chamberlain), *Sarpardar* (Master of Ceremonies) etc. The above mentioned examples of various offices illustrate that the administrative structure of the Bahamanis was constituted on the same pattern as the Delhi Sultanate.

Under Muhammad I the kingdom was partitioned into four *atraf*s or provinces which had their headquarters at Daulatabad, Berar, Bidar and Gulbarga. These were placed under the charge of governors. The nomenclature for governors varied viz. *Musnad-i-Ali* (Daulatabad), *Majlis-i-Ali* (Berar), and *Azam-i-Humayun* (Bidar) and *Malik Naib* (Gulbarga). The province of Gulbarga was of strategic importance and it was placed in charge of a governor, whose loyalty was unquestionable, called *Malik Naib* or *Viceroy*.

The troops directly under the king comprised of *yakka jawanan* or *silahdaran* (200 men). The bodyguards of the king were 4000 in number and are referred to as *khasakhel*. The *Amirul Umara* was the commander in chief of the army and the officers called *barbardaran* were responsible for mobilizing troops whenever the need arose. *Munhiyan* or secret service agents of the Bahamani kings kept him informed about the developments both within the kingdom and outside.

Nobility: *Afaqis* and *Dakhnis*

The reign of king Shihabuddin Ahmad I (1422-1436) is significant because of the change of capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. The Bidar period of Bahamani rule witnessed the weakening of Tughlaq influence and also the law of primogeniture being applied in accession to the throne. His predecessor Firuz is credited with promoting the *Afaqis* (nobles who were newcomers and had come from outside India) who came to the Deccan from Persia, Iraq and Arabia. The reign of Tajuddin Firuz (1397-1422) is particularly important for the induction of Hindus (Brahmins) in administrative system. He also entered into matrimonial alliances with the Hindu Kingdom (viz. Vijayanagar ruler). The other group of nobility from north India was called the *Dakhnis*. The influence of newcomers increased in the administration of Bahamani kingdom. During the reign of Ahmad I (1422-36), Khalaf Hasan Basri was made *wakil-I-sultanate mutlaq* (Prime Minister) and was bestowed the title of *Malik-ut-Tujjar* (Prince of Merchants). He also inducted in the king's army archers from Iraq, Khurasan, Transoxiana, Turkey and Arabia. The importance given to *Afaqis* created resentment among the *Dakhnis* which resulted in factional struggle thereby resulting in instability.

20.9 RISE OF MAHMUD GAWAN TO POWER

The relations between the two groups *Afaqis* and *Dakhni* had deteriorated to such an extent that it was now important to bring about a balance between the two for ensuring stability in the kingdom. During the reign of Alauddin Ahmad II (1436-58), the conflict between *Afaqis* and *Dakhni* further continued to increase. Alauddin Humayun Shah's reign (1458-61) is noted for the rise of Mahmud Gawan to prominence and power. The *Burhan-i-Maathir*, (of Syed Ali Tabatata compiled in 1592) refers to the appointment of

Mahmud Gawan as chief or prime minister by Alauddin Humayun Shah (1458-61). In the text the king says (Sherwani p. 175) “Nobles of my kingdom! I am confident that it is impossible to carry on the government of the kingdom efficiently without the appointment of a minister who should be well known the world over and who should excel in wisdom among the Arabs as well as ‘Ajamis. We are on the threshold of a new epoch in the history of the country and I cannot do better than follow the advice of one who should be clothed with the outward attributes of truth and good faith and who should inwardly be free from vice and vanity. I have therefore made up my mind to appoint Khwaja Nizmuddin Mahmud Gilani, one of the best known in the state for his sense of justice and equity as well as for his deep thought to be my chief minister”. Mahmud Gawan was bestowed with the title of *Malik-ut-tujjar*, and made *tarafdar* of Bijapur. The policy of bringing about reconciliation between the two factions (Afaqis and Dakhnis) was pursued by chief minister Malikut tujjar Mahmud Gawan during the period of Regency (when Nizamuddin Ahmad III, the king, was a minor) – 1461 to 1463. In the period between 1461-63 Mahmud continued as *tarafdar* of Bijapur. The other important afaqi noble was *Khwaja-i-jahan-turk* who was appointed as *tarafdar* of Telangana.

The nobility comprising of the Dakhins and afaqis had always been hostile to each other. However all through this period constant attempts were made to bring about rapprochement between the two. During the reign of Shamsuddin Muhammad III (1463-1482 and the end of regency in 1466) Mahmud Gawan again became the Chief Minister. Burhan-I-Maathir (Sherwani, p. 200) gives a description of the king’s view on government: “It should be known that both religious and worldly affairs require the help of advisory councils, and the laws on which the organization of every state or country is based need great thought and circumspection. Thus it is necessary that care should be taken to acquire the opinion of the wise in matters pertaining to the affairs of the government. For God almighty himself ordered the Apostle of Islam (Peace be upon him and his descendants) that he should take counsel in worldly affairs. The Apostle laid down that counsel was like a fortress against repentance and a refuge from reproach, and the Caliph ‘Ali has said: The best of ministers is counsel and the worst of powers is self-will. The purport of all this is that it is best to act upon the advice of a wise minister, for his opinion would be like a mirror of truth and honesty. The philosophers of old have said that kings and successful leaders should not interfere with the policy of the state without the advice of wise elders”.

With the rise of Mahmud Gawan to power the Bahmani Kingdom witnessed unprecedented territorial expansion. It covered the whole of Konkan coast in the west to Andhra in the east, river Tungbhadra in the south to Berar in the north and Khandesh became its Protectorate. The provincial administration was reorganised by Mahmud Gawan. The bigger *tarafs* were now divided into 8 *sarlashkarships* or provinces of medium size. Gawil and Mahur were created out of Berar, Daultabad comprised of Daulatabad and Junnar (territories covering Daman, Bassein, Goa and Belgaum), Gulbarga was divided into Bijapur and Ahsanabad-Gulbarga (included Naldurg and Sholapur); Tilangana comprised of Rajamundhry (Nalgonda, Masulipatam) and Warrangal. The older provinces were partitioned and certain areas were placed under the crown as *khasa-I-sultan* or Royal territory. This measure was introduced to reduce the power of the older *tarafdars* or provincial governors. Mahmud Gawan tried to accommodate *Dakhnis* and afaqis in the nobility by giving them important assignments. Malik Hasan Nizamul Mulk was made *sarlashkar* of Tilangana and Imad-ul-mulk was made *Sarlashkar* of Berar. Yusuf Adil (Afaqi) was made *Sarlashkar* of Daultatabad, Junnar and Chakan. He also made attempts to befriend the Hindu rulers for political gain (Vijayanagar against Hindu rulers of Orissa). These assignments were not permanent and the nobles could be shifted.

The reforms of Mahmud Gawan were aimed at curbing the power of the *tarafdars*. They were in charge of military administration of the province and mobilized troops and appointed commanders who were in charge of garrisons and forts. Mahmud Gawan

attempted to restrict their authority by bringing most of the forts and their commanders under his direct control. The *tarafdar's* control was now limited to only one fort in the province. These were also meant to bring the revenue resources assigned to commanders under the direct scrutiny of the central government. Mahmud Gawan was also responsible for adopting revenue assignment on the basis of measurement of land. The policy of accommodation and equilibrium is reflected in Mahmud Gawan's efforts to induct equal number of old comers habshis, *Dakhnis* and newcomers – Iranians, Circasian and Central Asian immigrants in the nobility. *Sarlashkar* was appointed from amongst both the groups i.e. *Dakhnis* and *Afaqis*. He made Fathullah Imdaulmulk and Malik Hasan Nizamulmulk (*Dakhnis*) *sarlashkar* of Mahur and Gulbarga respectively. Yusuf Adil Khan (*afaqi*) was made *Sarlashkar* of Daulatabad and Prince Azam Khan was made *Sarlashkar* of Warrangal and Fakhrul-mulk Gilani (*Dakhni*) was made *Sarlashkar* of Junnar. Mahmud Gawan's reforms were not appreciated by the nobility and after his death the conflict among the nobles acquired a new dimension and was now no longer based on racial considerations. The conflict was now purely based on the desire to seize power by whatever means. This element of ruthlessness in the nobility brought about the downfall of the Bahamanis.

20.10 DECLINE

Nobility played an important role in the polity under the Bahamanis, succession was generally based on heredity but the nobles exercised considerable power over the Sultan and acted as kingmakers and policymakers. They also brought about instability in the kingdom.

The clash of the Bahamanis with Vijaynagar was for the control over Tungbhadra doab (between Krishna and Tungbhadra), Krishna and Godavari deltas (ports, foreign trade) and Marathawara country (konkan, goa ports). At times Bahamanis joined hands with rulers of Telingana against Vijayanagar.

It appears that the Bahamanis like any other political power in the region were vying for political supremacy. Thus they were involved in hostilities against the Muslim states of Malwa, Gujarat and Khandesh and also joined hands with the Hindu chiefs (Telingana) against Vijayanagar rulers. Political expediency was the major criteria which determined relations with other states. The relation of Bahamani sultans with other political powers in the region kept vacillating. They could not be static since the political alliances and hostilities were based on securing the frontiers or boundaries of the kingdom and also further extension of territory against encroachment by any expansionist political power. Frequent military engagement proved detrimental to the Bahamani state.

The decline of Bahamanis paved the way for the establishment of a number of Deccan kingdoms ruled by different dynasties. They were: Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar, Barid Shahis of Bidar, Imad Shahis of Berar, Adil Shahis of Bijapur and Qutab Shahis of Golconda. They continued as independent kingdoms till they were slowly conquered by the Mughals over a long period of time.

20.11 BENGAL: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

In Bengal (Lakhnauti) the governor who first adopted the title of Sultan was Ikhtiyaruddin-Yuzbek in 1252. The hold of Delhi sultans over Bengal was fragile. Malik Tajuddin Arsalan also ruled almost independently over Bengal with the title of Sultan and died in 1265. Proably his son owed nominal allegiance to Balban. The governors of Bengal very often adopted the title of Sultan. The important ruling houses which ruled over independent Bengal were Iliyas Shahis (1342-1415, 1442-58) and Husain Shahis (1493-1538).

Due to the paucity of sources we are not in a position to give a detailed analysis of the administrative system of Bengal. However, we will try to reconstruct the administrative history of the Bengal sultanate on the basis of limited sources available to us. The independent sultanate in Bengal emerged as a result of the weakening of the Delhi Sultanate. During this period the two dynasties which ruled in independent Bengal were Iliyas Shahis and Husain Shahis. The administrative system that emerged in Bengal was in some ways similar and also different from the Delhi Sultanate.

20.11.1 Central Administration

The highest office of the sultanate was that of the Sultan. There were a number of officers attached to the Sultan or to the royal establishment to help in the central administration. There were: *Jamdar-I-Ghair-Mahalli* (The Bearer of the cup outside the palace), *Sar-I-Naubat-Ghair-Mahalliyan* (The chief of the guards outside the palace), *Mahalliyan-I-Naubat-I-Ali* (The chief of the Guards of the Royal Household), *Kar-I-Farman* (officer on special duty), *Dabir-I-khas* (personal secretary), *Vaidya* (Royal physician). Other officers employed in the central administration were: Chief *Wazir* (Prime Minister) *Sar-i-Lashkar* (commander of the army), *Qazi* (Justice) *Mudir-i-Zarb* (superintendent of the mint).

All executive, legislative and judicial powers were vested in the Sultan and emanated from him. Sultans like Alauddin Husain Shah regarded themselves as agents of God on earth. However *Ulema* and *Qazis* acted as a curb on the King's power.

The *Jamdar-i-Ghair-Mahalli* or *Sharabadar-i-ghair-Mahalli* supervised the eatables given to the king when he was on tour military or otherwise. This office was attached to the office of Governor.

Sar-i-Naubat-Ghair-Mahalliyan was the head of the royal army stationed outside the palace.

Mahalliyan-i-Naubat-i-Ali performed the task of supervising the household establishment of Sultan including remuneration to the king's personal staff.

Kar-i-farman was the official who carried out the orders of the king with regard to implementation of certain tasks.

Dabir-i-Khas (Personal secretary) – He was responsible for correspondence in connection with state affairs between the king and his officials. During the reign of Husain Shah his Personal Secretary was a Hindu Brahmin called Sanatan Goswami. *Dabir-I-Khas* had *Katibs* (writers) under him.

Vaidyas were employed by sultans and were referred to as *Antaranga* (intimates). *Mukunda Das* was the chief physician of Husain Shah.

The officers in the central administration were:

Chief *Wazir* (Malik-ul-Wuzra) (*Bada Wazir*): There *wazirs* adopted exalted titles: viz. *Al-khan-Al-Azam-Khaqan-ul-Muazzam* (the great khan, the exalted khaqan), *Muin-ul-muluk wa-s-salatin* (the aider of the kings and monarchs), *Naseh-ul-muluk wa-s-salatin* (the adviser of the kings and sultans), *Bahlawi-ul-Asrwa-z-zaman* (the hero of the age and the time), *Sahib-us-saif-wa-l-qalam* (the lord of the sword and the pen) and *Masnad-i-Ali* (the great prop or support of the king).

They guided the king and were responsible for general administration. They were the most important functionaries in the administration system placed next in hierarchy to the king and royal family. They also controlled the revenue administration and military administration.

Sar-i-Lashkar was the commander of the army. Sometimes he was attached to the post of the *wazir*.

Qazi: were responsible for administration of justice. He supervised, controlled and managed the trust (awqaf) of orphans, lunatics etc. and handled civil cases.

Mudir-i-zarb: He performed the task of supervising the mint where coins were struck.

20.11.2 Provincial Administration

Towards the end of Turko-Afghan rule the provinces came to be called sarkars. They were known as *Iqta*, *Iqlim* or *Arsah* earlier. *Ain-i-Akbari* tells us that there were 19 sarkars in Bengal. Towards the end of Sultanate rule, these sarkars were: Lakhnauti, Purnea, Tajpur, Srihatta, Sunargaon, Chatgaon, Satgaon, Madaran, Tanda etc. The *Iqlim* was further divided into mahals and *Shiqs*. These were basically revenue and territorial divisions. The important provincial officers were:

Wazir (governor): Wazir was in charge of *Iqlim* or *Shahr*. He was the provincial governor. He sometimes combined the office of *Sar-i-Lashkar*. Sometimes he was responsible for administration of two provinces.

Wazir/Governor	Place of Posting	Year of Posting (AD)	Reigning King
Sarfraz Khan	Exterior in the east	1443	Nasir-ud-din Mahmud IV
Ahmad Khan	Shahr Sajla	1450	-do-
Iqrar Khan	Arsah Sajla Mankhabad and Shahr Labala Bar– Bakabad (on transfer from the last place)	1455	Rukn-ud-din <i>Barbak</i>

Source: S.E. Hussain, *The Bengal Sultanate*, p. 228

Mir-I-Bahr (commander of the sea or Navy)

An inscription dated 1526 found in Bangladesh of the reign of Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah refers to the post of Mir-I- Bahr.

Sar-I-Khail (Chief of Cavalry): The sultan of Bengal possessed a strong cavalry.

Qazi: Provincial *Qazis* performed the same function as the *Qazis* at the center.

Sar-I-Gumashta (Revenue Inspector cum chief accountant): He monitored the work of Gumashta and performed the duty of supervising the agricultural production and assessing the state's share of production. The gumashtas were helped by the *amil*s in their work. *Sar-i-Gumashta* in Bengal supervised the accounts of Gumashta.

Nazir (supervisor): He was in charge of accounts of revenue department.

Al-Khazan (Treasurer) kept the accounts of income and expenditure of government.

Kotwal Bak-Ala (The chief police officer): Many *kotwals* were subordinate to him and helped him in securing law and order and stability. Junior Police Magistrate was called *Kotwal Bak*.

Munsif Diwan-I-Kotwali (Judge of Police or criminal courts): He was responsible for settling criminal cases. Devkot inscription of 1512 which refers to the building of mosque and minaret during the period of Alauddin Husain Shah mentions Khan-I-Muazzam Rukn Khan as holding the position of Munsif Diwan-I-Kotwali of Firuzabad.

Shiqdar (administrator of *Shiq*)

In an Arabic inscription Dinar Khan is referred to as occupying the position of *Shiqdar* in 1427.

Jangdar (warrior): An Arabic inscription of 1460 of the period of Ruknuddin Barbak Shah refers to Ulugh Nusrat Khan as *Jangdar* a post which was held along with *shiqdar*. He kept an armed contingent under him.

20.12 MALWA: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Malwa as an independent Sultanate was established when the governor of the Tughlaqs, Dilawar Khan Ghuri, declared himself independent from the Delhi Sultanate and adopted the royal insignia viz. white canopy and scarlet pavilion and got the Khutba read in his name (1401-2). In 1436 Ghuri rule came to an end with the accession of Mahmud Khalji to the throne of Malwa.

The administrative system of Malwa was similar to the Delhi sultanate. This independent kingdom also emerged as the consequence of decay of the Delhi sultanate.

20.12.1 Territorial Extent

The sultanate of Malwa exercised control over territories such as Bayana, Kalpi, Chanderi, Raipur, Ratanpur, Banswara and Mandasor etc. Most of the areas were indirectly controlled by the Sultan and had accepted the nominal suzerainty of the sultan. They made an annual payment as tribute in return for protection (Ajmer, Bayana, Kalpi, Raipur etc.). Ranthambhor, Mandasor, Chanderi were the frontier and strategic regions. Other administrative units (provinces) were Ujjain, Bhilsa and Hoshangabad. Mandu, Dhar and Nalcha were placed under the direct control of the Sultan.

20.12.2 Sultan and Other Officers

Sultan: At the apex of the system of administration was the Sultan. His personal staff or private establishment comprised of officials like *Hajib* (chamberlain), *Dabir* (secretary), *Dawatdar* (keeper of ink pot), *Amir Akhur* (amir commanding the horse), *Mir-Shikar* (helped the king in hunting expeditions) etc. These officers were responsible for supervision of Majlis, protection of king, royal correspondence and assisted the king on hunting expeditions.

The collection of letters called *Maktubat-i-Ashrafi* contain the counsel of the saint Sayid Ashraf Jahangir Samnani on the theory of state. This counsel was sought by Sultan Hoshang Shah.

The advice is given hereunder:

“When you become lord (King) act honestly to please God so that he may favour you with my blessings. Justice is the only proper means of offering your thanks to God for his great blessing”.

“Amir (king) should lead the army at its head. He must shun wine and luxury. He must complete the day’s work without leaving it for the morrow”.

“In important works he must consult good, honest and learned men”.

“Consultation may appear as the divulgence of a secret, but in reality it is the right method of keeping a secret. In consultation he must listen to all without at once expressing approval of any of the opinions. He should move in such a way that each one of them may feel that he has acted upon his advice.”

“Nothing can be more destructive for the king than the following four things: a) indulgence in sensuality, b) Loss of one’s own moral character, c) Persistent and severe punishment, d) Terrorisation of the subjects”.

“The amir (king) must get up one Pas (3 hours) before sunrise and after offering his prayers he should meet the Ulama, but he should carefully avoid irreligious ‘*Ulama* (‘*Ulama-I-Mudahina*). He should then allow plain speaking truthful darveshes to meet him and should listen to them. But all this work he must finish before sunrise and allow them leave. He should then meet his *wazirs* and other officers who have important works of the state and attend to them. He should then allow the common subject to approach him and should do justice to them.”

“The *Amir* (king) should appoint only learned and trustworthy persons, who should also be popular.”

“Whatever I could remember at this moment I have written to you and hope that it would be useful for the present as well as for the future kings to come.”

Court: The royal court had the *Bar-i-am* (public chamber) or *Majlis-i-am*. The issues related to administrative affairs were deliberated upon in *Majlis-i-Khas*. *Mahfil-i-Uns* was the king’s private chamber in the Royal court.

The succession to the throne was determined on the basis of nomination within the royal family. However, rule of primogeniture was not always applied.

Ministers/Officials: The most important official was *wazir*. He was responsible for financial administration and also the overall administration. *Ariz-i-Mumalik* was the head of the army organisation. The *Shaikh-ul-islam* looked after the religious matters whereas *Qazi* was responsible for administration of justice.

20.12.3 Military Organisation

Ariz-I-Mumalik was in charge of the army. The sultan’s army was directly recruited and controlled by the center/Sultan. When army was mobilized for special purposes a separate *Ariz* was deputed. The governors of provinces mobilized their own forces. The troops recruited and maintained by governors were to be made available to the sultan whenever required. The infantry, cavalry and elephants constituted the wings of the army. The army mobilized for war had an organised system of movement in the battle field with specific responsibilities. *Maimna* and *Maisra* were the right and left wings of the army, *Qalb* was the center, *Junah* was the front of center, *Yazak* was the advance guard and *Saqa* the rear guard. *Muntajib* under the Sultan’s direction monitored the various wings. The weapons used were: *Atish-i-Naft* (Catapult for throwing fire), *Sang Manjaniq* (Catapult for throwing stones) etc.

20.12.4 Finance

Maathir-I-Muhammad shahi compiled by Shihab Hakim (official history of Mohammad Shah Khalji) and *Tarikh-I-Nasir shahi* (written by a courtier contemporary of Nasir Shah (sultan)) inform us that the territory was distributed as *iqta* to officers. *Khalsa land* was held by the sultan and the revenue administration was under the control of revenue officers deputed by Sultan/center. The revenue officers were responsible for collection of revenue from cultivators and it was paid to the state. Probably the revenue was collected at the time of harvest. *Diwan-i-wizarat* looked after the organization of revenue administration. Income was also obtained from tribute paid by small chiefs and *Khidmati* (presents) given to the king by officers and chiefs. Plunder and raids into other territories also brought in booty (income). The administrative positions were held by both Hindus and Muslims. During the reign of Mahmud II (Khalji), Hindu officers (Salivahan and Medini Rai) held important offices in the government. The rulers of Malwa also offered protection to the Rajputs and gave them shelter in times of need.

20.13 SUMMARY

In this unit we have discussed the administrative structure of Vijayanagar, Bahamani and other Kingdoms viz. Malwa and Gujarat. We have tried to analyse the important features of Vijayanagar administrative system especially Nayak and Ayagar systems. The Vijayanagar kings ruled over a vast time span from 1336-1649. We have tried to trace the continuities in their administrative system with the Cholas and changes introduced during the vast period of their rule. The Bahamani kingdom was established as a result of rebellion of Amirs of Delhi Sultanate. The administrative system under the Bahamanis was to some extent based on the pattern of Delhi Sultanate but with the consolidation of Bahamani power, many changes were introduced in the administrative structure, which became quite elaborate. Malwa and Bengal were the provinces of Delhi sultanate, which became autonomous as a result of weakening of Delhi Sultanate. Their administrative system was quite similar to that of Delhi Sulanate. The peculiar characteristic of Bengal was that many governors viz. Bughra Khan, the son of Balban, had adopted the title of sultan.

20.14 GLOSSARY

Ajamis	:	Non Arab lands
Kanikkai	:	Tax for maintenance of army
Nadu	:	Territorial unit, non-brahman agrarian settlements constituted a nadu in a locality
Nattar	:	Dominant non-brahman land holders and tax payers of nadu
Periyannadu	:	Supralocal assemblies of the 13 th century
Sabha	:	an assembly which represented the Brahmadeya villages (of land owning Brahmins)
Ur	:	assembly of the nattar

20.15 EXERCISES

- 1) Discuss the characteristics of *Nayaka* system under the Vijayanagar rulers.
- 2) Describe the administrative structure of the *Bahamanis*.

UNIT 21 THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

Structure

- 21.1 Introduction
- 21.2 Background
- 21.3 Initiating Stable Systems
- 21.4 Reworking the Revenue System
- 21.5 New Hierarchical Order/The Mansab System
- 21.6 Assignment of Revenue / The Jagir System
- 21.7 The Nobility
- 21.8 Reorganising Administration
 - 21.8.1 Central Administration
 - 21.8.2 Provincial and Local Administration
- 21.9 Summary
- 21.10 Exercises

21.1 INTRODUCTION

The political structure which developed during the sultanate period and under the Afghans (Lodis and Surs) was the forerunner of the Mughal system under Akbar and his successors. The most important constituent of the Administrative system of the Delhi Sultanate was the *Iqta*. However, since the time of Ibrahim Lodi we get reference to *Jagirs* (Abdullah : Tarikh-I-Daudi) which developed into a system of revenue assignment during the Mughal period. The administrative machinery which evolved since the time of the Ilbaris underwent many changes and many new units of administration were introduced in the time of Tughlak and Afghans; *shiq* came into existence during the Tughlak period and *sarkar* was introduced in the Afghan period. Several new administrative offices emerged viz. *shiqdar* and *faujdar*. *Shiqdar* and *Faujdar* were officers incharge of *shiq* and *pargana* in the Tughlak period. Initially *shiqdar* was incharge of a *shiq* but later *shiq* was subsumed into *pargana* and *shiqdar* became a *pargana* official in the period of the Afghans. *Shiqdars* were appointed in the *khalisa parganas* and cities (headquarter of *sarkar*) under the Afghans.

During the Lodi and Sur period *iqta* was no longer a territorial unit and it was replaced by *sarkar*. *Sarkar* comprised of a number of *parganas*. *Hakim* was the officer incharge of the *sarkar* in the Lodi period although this term is used interchangeably with *muqti* for those holding land assignments called *iqta* in the sources. *Iqtas* continued to be granted to assignees from *khalisa parganas* during the Afghan period and the *wajahdars* or *muqtis* or *amirs* exercised military and executive powers in the *iqta*. Under the Surs the *wajahdar* appointed their own *shiqdars* and *amilis* in their *iqtas*. During this period *iqtas* could be as big as a *sarkar*, of the size of the *pargana* or smaller than a *pargana*. They were not permanent and hereditary but were subject to transfer but not frequent transfer. *Iqtas* could also be retained by nobles as ancestral *iqtas* in accordance with the desire of the king during the Sur period. However, Islam Shah, the Sur ruler, tried to bring more and more land under *khalisa* by encouraging cash payment.

The assessment of revenue on the basis of measurement of land which had been introduced since Alauddin Khalji's time was further consolidated in the Lodi and Sur period. The administrative machinery under the Lodis and Surs was quite extensive. Although the administrative system of the earlier period continued under the Lodis but some new officials came into existence viz. *amins* (who measured land). Under Sur's too several new offices came into being at the *pargana* level: the *munsif-I-khazana* (treasury inspector), *khazandar* (treasurer) and *qanungo* (maintained the revenue papers).

Several changes were introduced under the Mughals, though certain features of the administrative system of the preceding period were retained. The *jagir* and *mansab* became important as novel features introduced under the Mughals. A new territorial unit called *suba* was introduced. The *subedar* emerged as the supreme officer of the province. The *shiqdar* was subordinated to the *faujdar* who became the officer in charge of either *sarkars* of two different subas/parganas in a *sarkar*. In the sphere of revenue administration also significant changes were introduced by Akbar although he relied on Shershah's endeavours and experiments in the field of revenue administration for introducing reforms. Thus, the administrative structure which developed under the Mughals was a furtherance of the earlier system in certain respects. However, certain important changes were introduced (*mansab*, *jagir*, revenue reforms) which brought about a high degree of centralisation in the imperial edifice.

21.2 BACKGROUND

A simple military victory is like erecting an edifice without a foundation. Such a structure collapses with the first blow. Military forces under Babur's command did succeed in achieving significant victories, first against the most prominent political power in north India under the Lodis, followed by others. Yet he could find no time for organising administrative structures or institutions to consolidate the gains. Humayun struggled and failed to hold this structure. However, the Mughal forces regrouped themselves, and with the assistance provided by the Safavid ruler of Persia, they recaptured the Delhi throne in July 1555. Accidental death of Humayun within a few months of this success did not allow him any time for the designing and development of political institutions or administrative structures suitable for resource mobilisation and evolution of a cohesive social structure, if he at all had any such plan. His successor, Akbar was only about fourteen years old when he was entrusted with works for which he was yet not adequately prepared and trained, that too in somewhat an alien land. But within four-five years time he appears to have acquired remarkable maturity. Gradually he not only extracted himself from endless intrigues of his nobility but also initiated steps towards maximisation of resource potential and a standardised distribution mechanism for the officials of the state. Simultaneously, he worked towards securing territorial integrity and organising nobility that was fully under his command and represented cohesiveness amidst heterogeneous social structure. To achieve these multifarious objectives he successfully carried out measures that constituted his administrative system and institutions.

Administrative and institutional structures that are highlighted in various scholarly works on the Mughals are presented normally in their mature forms. Such presentations obscure from our view the difficulties and developments of the formative years of the Mughal rule. Any attempt to explain the formation of the Mughal empire either as the legacy of the Sultanate period or in the continuation of the appanage system of central Asia, including the theory of sovereignty traced to the Mongols, or symbols and rituals that become current with the sixteenth and seventeenth century Mughals, do not satisfactorily provide explanations for the strength and stability of the Mughal empire. Further, one also does not find any meaningful difference between the character of the nobility that could be seen during the Sultanate period and that of the Mughals. If the previous state forms had failed to perpetuate the rule of any of the dynasties of the earlier period, then how could they be considered efficacious in containing the aspirations of the Mughal nobles, categorised as powerful groups of Turanis, Iranis, Indian Muslims and the Rajputs? Conversely, an understating of the administrative and institutional structures that evolved during the first twenty five years of Akbar's reign provide a better perspective on the formation of the Mughal empire.

The accidental death of Humayun placed Akbar on quite an insecure throne at a tender age (born in October 1542, accession in February 1556). Around next four years were

spent under an over-arching personality of Bairam Khan. This period was witness to contestations between different groups of kinsmen of Turani background for control over greater share of revenue from large contiguous areas, possibly for carving out an independent principality at some future date; along with no discernible control over the size of contingents under their control for which individual nobles had set their own salary-packets. For example, after removal of Bairam Khan while Munim Khan was appointed *wakil-us saltanate*, Shamsuddin Atka was awarded a *jagir* valued at one crore *tanka* without specifying how this amount was to be distributed among his supporters and the rate of payment for the troopers. Till about 1560 the position of Akbar, or the base of the Mughal empire, was unsound. Available information does not help in knowing what training or guidance prompted Akbar, in 1561, to initiate measures to assess afresh the resources of the controlled territories, and accordingly devise modes or systems of its distribution which would also not appear to be whimsical or totally arbitrary. Through different stages and arrangements these systems acquired their final shape, and with that the Mughal ruler positioned himself as the only source of patronage and supreme authority.

21.3 INITIATING STABLE SYSTEMS

Removal of Bairam Khan, as *wakil-us saltanate*, and appointment of Munim Khan (September 1560–November 1561) in his place had apparently made no visible improvement in the administration or income of the state. Rather, the situation had worsened. Around November 1561 Akbar revied upon Shamsuddin Atka and entrusted him with certain responsibilities. Soon it was followed by his formal appointment as *wakil-us saltanate* (November 1561–June 1562). From this time onwards some clarity of thought and approach towards governance comes into view. Such persons who had established their reputation as professional in approach and competent in their work were appointed in the revenue department irrespective of their past association with discredited nobles or officials. The revenue department initiated scrutiny of records to ascertain the value of nobles' land assignments (*jagirs*). Apparently some corrective steps were also initiated, leading to resentment. Added to this, the recall of Adham Khan from Malwa at this juncture precipitated the matter. Adham Khan who could not hold himself any longer engineered the assassination of Shamsuddin Atka (June, 1562) while the latter was in his office. Without loss of any time Adham Khan was executed at the express orders of Akbar. Munim Khan and Shihabuddin Ahmed Khan fled from Agra. Their flight, in a way, demonstrated their complicity in the murder of Shamsuddin Atka.

While timely action against Adham Khan fused possibility of any reprisals from the members of Atka family, it clearly demonstrated that Akbar would not hesitate to take severest action against any person, even if that person was considered to be close to the ruler and thereby above law, if he interfered in discharge of duties assigned by the ruler. Akbar took advantage of the alleged connivance of Munim Khan and others in the murder of Shamsuddin Atka and curtailed the power and authority of those who had misused it during all these years. Though he re-appointed Munim Khan as *wakil*, the latter found that he could no more exercise power and authority that a *wakil* had enjoyed till around this time. The most important change was the separation of revenue department from the control of the *wakil*. Thus around August 1563 Muzaffar Khan Turbati, who at an earlier stage was an employee of Bairam Khan and was also imprisoned after the removal of Bairam Khan, was promoted from *diwan-i buyutat* (*diwan* of royal *Karkhanas* or workshops) to *diwan-i kul* or *wazir* (central *diwan*) with extensive powers over income and expenditure of the state.

Appointment of Muzaffar Khan as *diwan-i kul* should not be seen as promotion of one faction against another, it was rather a clear demonstration of royal prerogatives. However this prerogative was not used indiscriminately. Office of *diwani* required professional expertise. Muzaffar Khan had acquired and used it to the benefit of his employer during his earlier assignment.

21.4 REWORKING THE REVENUE SYSTEM

Before discussing the innovation introduced by Akbar it is important to understand the revenue system of Sher Shah (1540-45). In Sher Shah's period standard schedule for the sown area (Ray or yield per unit area) was prepared. It was arrived at by annual measurement of land. It indicated high, medium and low yields for each crop. After arriving at the average produce, tax was fixed at 1/3rd of the average produce in kind or commuted into cash at current prices. Concessions were provided for crop failure.

The collection of data relating to revenue, which started during the *wikalat* of Shamsuddin Atka, continued unabated. It is reproduced as the *Ain-i nozdahsala* (nineteen year regulation) in the *Ain-i Akbari* starting in the 6th regnal year through 24th year (1561-79), without any break. State prescribed rates for individual crops for all the 'provinces' are recorded in the *Ain*. It is noticeable that these rates were evaluated at regular intervals and revisions were made. For instance, between 6th and 9th regnal year, covering all the 'provinces' except Malwa, single and identical rates for each crop were approved; between 10th and 14th year, rates are lower than the earlier phase, for most of the crops two rates (minimum and maximum) are given, and that these rates vary from 'province' to 'province'; last phase relating to 15th to 24th year registers rates that are still lower (in case of inferior crops there is a marked decline) and the difference in rates is quite pronounced between different *subas*. After completion of the evaluation process final *dasturs* were announced. Listed separately, however, harvest-wise final *dasturs* (cash revenue rates for crops) for the provinces indicate an upward movement in the rates; the increase is about 11%. However this increase matches with the increase, by about 11%, in the size of the unit area (*bigha*) implemented around 1586 and, thus, reflects only an adjustment.

The movement in crop rates does not appear either to be arbitrary in the sense that the ruler was after the hard earned labour of the producers or that he wanted to project himself as philanthropist. The changes were based on careful study of available data. Writing for the 11th regnal year, Abul Fazl says that around this time *jama'* (assessed revenue) was highly inflated and had caused great distress. Further, that under the directions of Muzaffar Khan and Todar Mal local revenue officials had submitted, to the central administration, area and revenue statistics (*taqsim*) for their respective jurisdictions; these were utilized to work out the *jama'*. Based on the measures initiated a few years later it can be said that the central revenue department was not fully satisfied with the information on account of large differences between *jama'* and *hasil* (collections) on a very large scale. They appear to have also identified the *zamindars* and the *jagirdars*, two functionaries of different nature, as the sources of interference. It may not have been considered practicable to remove the *zamindars*, who enjoyed hereditary superior rights over the produce in their areas, altogether from the country side scene, as Alauddin Khalji had attempted in earlier times. The position of the *jagirdars* was different as they could be paid in cash for their services to the state and be thus kept away from interfering in the intended measures for the rural sector. As a result, land assignments to the Mughal officials were terminated from the entire north Indian territories and this land was converted into directly administered territory or *khalisa* (1573-4).

If we look back at the revenue measures of Alauddin Khalji it is not very clear what precautionary steps he had taken to counter the prejudicial role of influence groups (*iqta'dars* and the *zamindars*) before he conducted measurement of land. Also, whether he classified the cultivated land according to the productivity of soil and whether his records gave any information relating to the extent of measured area under various jurisdictions, etc. In case of the Mughals, Abul Fazl is not very helpful in conveying the details about the survey work conducted by the *karoris*. This has led scholars to term the work carried out by the *karoris* as '*karori* experiment', which would mean that the

work was tentative in nature and thereby inconsequential. However, Badauni and Nizamuddin Ahmad are unanimous in providing such information that altogether alters our understanding and shows the thoroughness of the exercise that in the end produced results establishing firm control of the state over the resources of the empire, and thereby extremely useful in meeting the expenses of the state.

Accordingly, new territorial units were created. The sum total of this measure produced estimated revenue of one *kror* (10 million) *dams* for each territory. Each such unit of *khalisa* land was put into the charge of a *karori*. A *karori* was entrusted to carry out measurement of entire open lands reaching up to heavy forests, and clearly indicates land use under separate heads, like under habitation, water bodies (river, *talab* etc.), small hillocks, uncultivable waste (*usar*) for each village under his jurisdiction. In all likelihood, it is during the course of the above operation that productivity of different crops per unit area from good, middling and low fertility soil, a system introduced during the time of Sher Shah, was valued and fixed. *Karori* or some other state official monitored prices of food-grains in the local *mandis* during harvesting seasons and conveyed these to the central administration. To absorb seasonal fluctuations both in productivity and prices, data were collected over a period of five years. For the preceding five years similar information was obtained from 'knowledgeable persons', or from those local officials, including perhaps the *zamindars* also, who were actively engaged in revenue management. The entire process has been termed as *Ain-i dahsala*. Ten years' average, computed out of multiple of productivity and price, data was considered as the value of produce per unit area (known as *bigha*) and one third of this value, in terms of cash, was promulgated as the final crop rate for individual crops. Suppose one *bigha* of land produced 12 *maunds* of a certain crop, which was sold at the rate of 12 *dams* per *maund*, the total value of this crop will be (12 x 12) 144 *dams*. As 1/3 of the value of the produce was collected by the state the crop rate would be 48 *dams*. We shall come back to discuss the utility of the results of this exercise later.

21.5 NEW HIERARCHICAL ORDER/THE MANSAB SYSTEM

Mughal mansabdari system was modeled on the Mongol *yassa* (decrees of Chengiz Khan). The Mongol tribes were led by Khans (chiefs). The Mongol aristocracy was based on heredity and noble birth and the council which elected the chiefs was composed of the direct descendants of Chengiz. These nobles were commanders of men (Ulus-tribal units) and they obtained tribute from the territories for sustenance and were not a permanent landed aristocracy since the assigned territories held by them could be transferred.

Akbar had inherited a system in which there does not appear to be much clarity on the hierarchy of the Mughal nobles and the size and salary at which they maintained armed contingents under their command. Remuneration and expenditure on these two entailed huge financial liability on the State. Right from the time of the establishment of the Sultanate, payments for these two were made through alienation of state revenue from assigned territory to individuals. The Mughals too followed the same practice. Arrangement appears to have been very flexible. Evidence for the early years show that land or revenue assignment to a noble was announced first and thereon he spent a proportion of the income on the maintenance of his contingent. From all accounts it appears that each noble or commander was free to fix the size of his contingent as well as rates of payment for his soldiers. Following from this, if one or a group of nobles surreptitiously maintained a large or small sized contingent (for some evil design in their minds) they could do so. One wonders if the rebellious behaviour of some of the groups of nobles during the early years of the 1560s was one of the manifestations of this kind? The possibility cannot be ruled out. The remedial step, which could not be considered radical but appears

to take cognizance of revised yet highly inflated *jama*, was standardisation of rates for the troopers in the 11th regnal year. Remuneration or allowances of individual nobles was not touched in order to avoid general discontentment among the very section that had provided strength and military support the state.

In 1573-4 an innovative scheme was introduced that streamlined the position of the nobles in the state hierarchy. The arrangement was called *mansab* system. Under the *mansab* system ranks were expressed in numerical terms. The *Ain-i Akbari* has listed 66 ranks, though in practice only 33 were utilized. The entire hierarchical ordering of the state officials, irrespective of office and their work, was covered under the scheme, starting with the lowest rank of 10 reaching the highest of 5,000. Above 5,000 and up to 7,000 were reserved for the princes of royal blood. Though reference about numerical ranks from earlier times could be found, nothing was as elaborate and comparable to the Mughal *mansab* system.

Abul Fazl points out in the *Ain* “*For this cause(to help him) did His Majesty establish the ranks(mansabs) of mansabdars from the dahbashi (commander of ten) to the dahhazari (commander of ten thousand), limiting however, all commands above five thousand to his august sons.....*

*The number of mansabs is sixtysix ,the same as the value of letters in the name of Allah which is an announcement of the eternal bliss His Majesty sees through some men at the first glance and confers upon them high rank. Some times he increases the mansabs of a servant but decreases his contingent-(sawar). He also fixes the number of the beast of burden .The monthly grants to the mansabdars vary according to their contingent (sawar). An officer whose contingent(sawar) comes up to his mansab is put in the first class of his rank. If his contingent(sawar) is one half and upwards (of the mansab) he is put to the second class ;the third class contains those contingents which are still less.....” (S. Athar Ali, ‘**Foundation of Akbar’s organization of Nobility**’ *Medieval India Quarterly*, Vol. No. III, No. 3 and 4 pp.296-297)*

During the Sultanate period ranking was expressed by designations that were separate for the military and civil personnel; lower rank commanders along with their contingents were integral to the contingent of a higher ranked commander. Under the Mughals, each *mansabdar* (holder of a rank) maintained sanctioned strength of contingent and account for it and each was paid separately in accordance with the schedule of pay. By now the earlier three rates of payment fixed (1566-67) for the contingents were abolished and each member of the contingent, irrespective of his being part of a higher ranked *mansabdar* or a lower *mansabdar*, received the same salary, fixed at 8,000 *dams* per annum (per unit of sawar rank). To strictly ensure that the *mansabdars* properly maintained the sanctioned size of their contingents they were required to regularly bring their contingents, with the equipage, for inspection. The office of *bakshi* maintained descriptive rolls (*tashih*) of individual trooper and separate branding mark (*dagh*) for the war and transport animals of each *mansabdar*. Badauni informs us how many *mansabdars* cheated the exchequer by hiring untrained persons at the time of inspection and disbanding them once the inspection was over. Till about the 40th regnal year only one rank was used for the *mansab* which suggests that rank and size of contingent were the same.

The fraudulent practices noted by Badauni were perhaps also noticed by the Mughal administration. As a remedial step from the 40th regnal year onwards *mansabs* were expressed in dual terms, *zat* and *sawar*. While *zat* denoted the personal rank of an official, *sawar* indicated the sizes of contingents maintained by the *mansabdars*. Depending on the strength of the contingents *mansabdars* were placed in three categories. In the first, *zat* and *sawar* ranks were equal; in the second *sawar* rank was lower than the *zat* but stopped at half, or fifty percent, of the *zat* rank; under the third *sawar* rank was lower than fifty per cent of the *zat* rank. Salary for the *zat* rank varied

accordingly. The schedule of pay for the *mansabdars* given in the *Ain-i Akbari* was obviously redrawn after these changes were introduced. The schedule of pay in the *Ain* also lists size of stables, specifying species and numbers of war and transport animals, to be maintained by the *mansabdars*. The configuration that appears after the 40th regnal year is considered the classic form of the *mansab* system. The expenditure on the maintenance of these was borne out by the *mansabdars* out of their *zat* salary. Though it cost about twenty five percent of the *zat* salary, the balance left with the *mansabdars* was still very substantial by any standard. The overall assignments given to *mansabdars*, around the year 1600, out of the total revenue of the Mughal empire is estimated at around seventy five per cent.

The system reflected transparency both for upward movement on the professional front as well as rewards for the services without any kind of racial or parochial considerations. The most significant achievement of the *mansab* system was that it cut the nobility to its size and the ruler emerged as the sole arbiter.

However, the systems and institutions so assiduously built by Akbar could not receive similar attention and modifications to meet the challenge of the changing time and situations. During the entire seventeenth century there does not appear to have been a single attempt to re-evaluate the revenue potential. We do find *jama'* figures for different years of the seventeenth century and note that these are higher than those available in the *Ain*. However, factors responsible for the upward revisions are not known. If we take c. 1595 as the base year, the increase in *jama'*, recorded in 1628, was 81%; it shot up by 251% around 1656. By all account these were massive increases that could only have been caused by very marked upward movement in prices, substantial expansion in cultivated area and remarkable increase in the cultivation of superior crops. However, we have no information on any of these. Contrary to this, during Shahjahan's time assessed value of different areas were identified in terms of time-scale. Accordingly, *jagirs* were termed as nine-monthly or six-monthly and the like. This was done to compensate the gap between the estimated revenue (*jama*) and actual collection (*hasil*). The ranks were assigned on the calculation of estimated revenue while actual collection was much less than the estimate. In other words, officially it was accepted that yield from these stood at 75% or 50%, respectively, of the recorded *jama'* for them. While such a high magnitude of inflation in *jama'* figures, recorded at the centre, was a common knowledge, it appears quite strange that the ruler did not initiate any corrective step.

The obligations of the *mansabdars* underwent changes during the time of successors of Akbar. Jahangir had introduced a new provision in the *sawar* rank. According to it a part of *sawar* rank was termed *du-aspa sih-aspa* (currently written in its short form as 2-3h) in case of select *mansabdars*. For this part additional payment at the same rate of 8,000 *dams* per *sawar* was sanctioned. Thus, if the *sawar* rank was 4,000 out of which 1,000 was *du-aspa sih-aspa*, salary for this rank was calculated as $3,000 \times 8,000 + (1,000 \times 8,000 \times 2) = 40,000,000$ *dams*. Without *du-aspa sih-aspa*, salary for the same 4,000 *sawar* would have stood at $(4,000 \times 8,000)$ 32,000,000 *dams* only. The debilitation is more visible during the time of Shahjahan. The numbers of *du-aspa sih-aspa* awards are on a much larger scale. In addition, a still more serious step taken was, what could be termed as, the Rule of Proportion. The *mansabdars* were allowed to maintain 1/5, to 1/3 of the sanctioned strength of the *sawar* rank without any accompanying reduction in their claim on the maintenance amount for the *sawar* rank. While Aurangzeb continued with all these changes, an additional rank, called *mashrut* (conditional), was affixed. Apparently due to the Rule of Proportion the size of contingent available with a *mansabdar* was, at times, not considered adequate. Therefore, on appointment to *qila'dar* or *faujdar* like positions the concerned official was given *mashrut* rank. It was withdrawn on removal from the office.

Holders of Du-aspa sih-aspa ranks during Jahangir’s reign

	Total	holders of du-aspa sih-aspa ranks
10 th year of the Reign	191	12
20 th year of the Reign	219	23
30 th year of the Reign	253	25

Ref. *The Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, M. Athar Ali.

In addition, certain deductions from the salary of the *mansabdars*, introduced at the time of Shahjahan were carried forward by Aurangzeb. Nobles belonging to the Deccan region, called Deccanis in the Mughal records, compulsorily faced a deduction of one-fourth from their total salary calculated for both the ranks. In the records it is termed as *waza-i dam-i chauthai*. Aurangzeb apparently experienced further crunch in the resources and, therefore, added yet another deduction, called *khurak/rasad-i khurak* or *khurak-i dawwab*, towards meeting the cost for feed of animals in the imperial stables.

Mansabdari and *Jagirdari* systems explain the organisation of the Mughal nobility. Mansabdars receive their pay either in cash or in the forms of Jagirs. However most of them were *jagirdars*. They realised the revenue from their *jagirs* (which were normally assigned outside the province where they were posted) and imperial officials were appointed to keep a check over them. It seems that *zat* rank was generally always higher than the *sawar* rank. In the Mughal system the main distinction was not between civil and military as Athar Ali points out “.... there was no division between civil and military services as such” (*Medieval India Quarterly*, p. 299.) The main dividing line was between the executive and financial duties i.e *Subedar* and *Diwan, Amil* and *Faujdar*.

21.6 ASSIGNMENT OF REVENUE / THE JAGIR SYSTEM

Assignment of revenue from a limited and specified territory had been considered as the most convenient arrangement in lieu of payment for services to the state. *Iqta* was the term used during the Sultanate period. Prior to 1570s the Mughals appear to have continued with the arrangement that was not substantially different from administrative-cum-military appointments of the Lodi period for territories assigned to its commanders. A recent study has shown that in those years *hukumat, hirasat, hakim, sardari* etc. were more commonly used terms than *jagir*; and that their jurisdiction extended over much larger areas in size. Apparently this was one of the reasons for the growing tensions between the central authority and the *hakims/sardars* who considered themselves free to make revenue assignments in territories under their administrative jurisdictions (see Box). Prevailing over initial difficulties, from the early 1560s the central administration took control over the assignment of revenue in its own hands, it also started to distribute it over different localities.

In the early phase we have examples of assignments made by jagirdars from their jagris. For instance, when Shamsuddin Muhammad Atka was awarded additional ‘*jagir*’ area, valued at one *kror* (10,000,000) *tankas* in the Punjab he, apparently, was at liberty to distribute it among his kinsmen and followers. The ‘*jagir*’ of Mir Hashim located in Kahmard, Ghorbund and Zuhak was under the jurisdiction of the *hakim* of Kabul (Munim Khan); Munim Khan, as *hakim* of Kabul, removed Khwaja Jalauddin Mahmud from the ‘*jagir*’ of Ghaznin in 1557; Ali Quli Khan, commandant of Lucknow assigned a ‘*jagir*’ to Ismail Khan in Sandila (1558).

Major changes, like those in the revenue administration and the finalisation of the *mansab* system, also took shape in the *jagir* system during the 1570s. As pointed out earlier, all the *jagirs* in northern India were abolished in 1573-4 to neutralize the influence and interference of the nobility in carrying the extensive work primarily related to revenue assessment. Assignment of revenue, or *jagirs*, was re-introduced once details about the sum total of assessed revenue for villages attached to the lowest fiscal-cum administrative units, *parganas*, had become available to the central *diwani*. Salary entitlements of a *mansabdar* were calculated on the basis of his *zat* and *sawar* ranks. The salary was paid either in cash or through the assignment of a *jagir*, the latter being the preferable mode. In case the payment was made through the assignment of a *jagir*, the office of the central *diwan* would identify *parganas* the sum total of whose *jama'* was equal to the salary claim of the *mansabdar*. Accordingly assignment order for the *jagir*, listing these *parganas*, was issued. In case recorded *jama'* was in excess of salary claim the assignee was required to deposit the balance with the central treasury. On the other hand, if it was less than the salary claim the short fall was paid from the treasury. However, none of these assignments were permanent or hereditary. The ruler could shift part or the entire *jagir* from one part of the imperial territory to another at any time. Based on French traveller Bernier's statement, made towards the middle of the seventeenth century, it has generally been assumed that *jagirs* were frequently transferred, on an average of three years. However, evidence from contemporary sources indicate that some of the *jagirdars* were allowed to keep their *jagir* assignments in one locality for as long a period as eighteen years; for instance Itibar Khan for 15 years and Saiyid Khan Jahan for 18 years held their *jagirs* in Gwalior, Abdullah Khan for 17 years in Kalpi, Raja Bithal Das held the *jagir* in Dhaulpur for 10 years.

We get some references to a few specific types of *jagirs* being given. Of these *Watan jagirs* were given to the zamindars in their local dominions as remuneration for *mansab* (rank) accorded to them by the Mughal government for the services rendered by them. *Altamgha jagirs* (*jagirs* allotted to the nobles in their family town or place of birth) were given to non-zamindars since the time of Jahangir. Reference to these *jagirs* is also found in Aurangzeb's time. In the seventeenth century the practice of *Ijaradari* was extensive. According to this practice *jagirs* were leased out to troops for their maintenance by the small *Jagirdars*.

21.7 THE NOBILITY

Generally, in analysing the organisation of the Mughal nobility two major points have been highlighted: 1) patronage of Rajput chieftains at an unprecedented scale and their unfailing loyalty to the Mughal rulers, and 2) Akbar's brilliance in accommodating regional or ethnic groups till it reached a stage when all of them were almost evenly balanced. However, these suggestions do not adequately explain unfailing allegiance and faith of the Mughal nobility towards the ruling house during post-Akbar period. The Mughal relations, including matrimonial, with the Rajput chieftains continued for several generations reaching well into the eighteenth century, and yet it could not arrest the crisis of the Mughal empire. On the other hand, if Akbar's mobilization skill is considered to have produced a subordinate nobility, how could it have such a lasting effect that successive generations of political elites continued to accept their subordination to the Mughal rulers. Some of the Sultans of Delhi, who had risen from the ranks of nobles, too appear to have attempted to create or organise a dependent nobility, by promoting and patronising one kind of group against another, to ensure their loyalty to the ruling house. The fate of the successors of all these rulers is too well known and, therefore, we need not go into those details here. Akbar was a visionary and had clear thoughts on how to establish structures with near permanent roles for nobles irrespective of their regional or ethnic lineage.

The main group of camp followers, or nobles of Babur and Humayun, were trained and brought up in a different tradition. Their allegiance to the ruler was limited; the underlying principal was acceptance of their near autonomous authority over a territory in return for military support. Taking advantage of Akbar’s immature age and inexperience, some of these nobles had manoeuvred to obtain contiguous areas, in lieu of their services, for themselves and their kinsmen. The Mirzas in Sambhal, the Uzbeks in Awadh, the Atkas in Punjab are a few examples. So long as they were allowed near autonomous authority over their respective regions they continued to remain loyal. However, they did not hesitate to take to arms against the central authority when the process to re-evaluate revenue potential (1561), engaging trained meritorious personnel, was initiated. They considered it as interference, and erosion of their autonomy. Paradigm shift in the attitude of the nobility, from confrontation to cooperation, was needed. This transformation in the attitude could only be achieved through assurance of security and lucrative compensation by the state. To meet this prerequisite the *mansab* system clearly defined available hierarchies for the entire state officials, irrespective of ethnic, regional or any other kind of consideration. It also assured substantial compensation for their services. For example, a rank holder of 5,000 *zat* was allowed Rs. 30,000 per month. After meeting expenses for the maintenance of obligatory war and transport animals and equipage, around 25% of this amount, the balance of Rs. 22,500 per month was still very high and attractive by any standard for that age. The system was, in many ways, transparent and that removed suspicions of undue favours and rewards to others. It also did not make any distinction between an old associate and a newcomer, including the Indian elements.

Percentage of Hindu nobles out of the total nobles

	Akbar 1595	Shahjahan 1628-58	Aurangzeb 1658-78, 1679-1707	
5000 and above	14.3	24.5	19.6	32.9
3000 to 4500	10.0	25.0	20.0	27.1
1000 to 2700	35.3	21.3	22.3	33.1
500 to 900	21.8			
Total	22.5	22.4	21.6	31.6

Ref. *The Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, M. Athar Ali.

This table shows that during Aurangzeb’s reign the percentage of Hindu nobles increased due to the induction of Deccanis (Marathas etc.) into Mughal service.

From later accounts, the change in the conduct and perspective of the nobility is well established. Individuals might have taken the extreme step of rebellion; they failed in garnering sufficient support to become a threat to the Mughal rule. They did take sides during times of succession problem yet there is not a single instance when any one from the nobility staked his claim for the throne. The subordination of the nobility was complete and final. Various racial groups were included in the Mughal nobility during Babur, Humayun and Akbar’s period. The most prominent of thee groups can be classified as Turanis (central Asia), Iranis (Persians), Afghans, Shaikhzadas (Indian Muslims) and Rajputs. In the seventeenth century Deccanis were also included, example, Bijapuris, Hyderabadis and Marathas.

21.8 REORGANISING ADMINISTRATION

Information obtained during the survey of the territories, under the supervision of the *karoris*, was further utilised for re-organisation of administrative divisions. Though we come across territorial classifications from the Sultanate period, paucity of related details would frustrate any attempt to demarcate either the ‘provinces’ of Alauddin or the

sarkars of the Lodi period. It is a misnomer to call them provinces. Many of these appear to be similar in size to *sarkars* of Mughal period or present day districts; for example Delhi, Meerut, Baran (modern Bulandshahr), Kol (modern Aligarh), Amroha, Bahraich, Gorakhpur etc. Bengal and Orissa in the east to Kabul in the northwest and Gujarat in the southwest Mughal territories were divided into twelve *subas* (provinces) in 1582. Each *suba* was further divided into *sarkars*, each *sarkar* encompassing large numbers of *parganas*. Apparently geo-political considerations were the main determinant in the shaping of a *suba* and its lower divisions. Mughal demarcations of territories in many cases were maintained subsequently during the British period. Later on three new provinces were added i.e. Berar, Khandesh and Ahmednagar.

By the year 1582 the Mughal Empire had not only developed two major tiers of governance, central, provincial and local, it had also given shape to various administrative offices for ensuring efficient and effective working of the state both at the central as well as provincial levels. In the division of authority proper safeguards were provided to ensure that supreme power would be vested in the ruler.

21.8.1 Central Administration

The office of *wakil-us Saltanate* had become most powerful during the period of Bairam Khan's regency, enjoining both the important functions of administrative and revenue departments. The arrangements continued for another two years when Munim Khan and Shamsuddin Muhammad Atka were elevated to this position one after the other. However, after the assassination of Shamsuddin Atka, Munim Khan also came under suspicion for the conspiracy, Akbar took advantage of the situation and drastically curtailed the powers of the *wakil*. Munim Khan was reappointed as *wakil* without the revenue department. It was not before long that while the office of the *wakil* lost all lustre, the office of *diwani* (revenue department), successively under the supervision of meritorious professional hands, emerged as one of the most important and powerful departments. However the emperor was the supreme head of the administration and the fountainhead of all powers. All the important appointments were made by the emperor.

Another important office at the centre was that of *bakshi*. The *bakshi* was responsible for keeping strict watch over proper maintenance of the sanctioned size of armed contingents and war equipment by the *mansabdars*.

The office of *sadr*, bestowed on one of the most respected theologians of the time, on account of its almost unlimited authority to distribute allowances and stipends, had become very lucrative during the first twenty-five years of Akbar's reign. In the eyes of a contemporary, the largess squandered by this office, from about 1556 till around the middle of the 1570s, was far larger than the total value of earlier three hundred years. In a way this office had started to become another power centre. However, the promulgation of *mahzar* (declaration according to which in case of conflicting views on religion Akbar's view would prevail) in 1580 ended their domination in matters of religion. It was followed by severe restrictions on the authority of a *sadr* for award of revenue-free grants etc.

21.8.2 Provincial and Local Administration

The Mughal empire was divided into twelve *subas* or provinces by Akbar in 1582. These were Allahabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malwa.

Later on three more added after the conquest of Deccan. These were Ahmednagar, Khandesh and Berar. Subedar, diwan, bakhshi, *miradl (qazi)*, *sadr*, *kotwal*, *mirbahr* (incharge of port duties, customs etc.) and *waqianavis* were the key officials of *suba*.

The *subedar* (governor or *sipahsalar*) was the head of the *suba* administration. The governor was entrusted with wide range of powers relating to provincial administration. In 1586-87 as a part of new experiment two governors were appointed in each *suba*. According to Abul Fazl in the case of inability of one the other could take his place. But the experiment was abandoned after sometime.

At provincial levels, separation and independence of authority of important officials was strictly enforced. Each province was provided with an administrative head, who was initially called Sipahsalar. Hakim, Nazim and Subedar were other designations. During course of time Subedar became a more common title used for this office. He, however, had no jurisdiction over the revenue department.

Next in importance was the *diwan*. Like the central *diwan* (*diwan-i kul*) provincial *diwan* was in-charge of all matters relating to revenue affairs. The diwan had under him a number of subordinate and local officials, such as *amin*, *qanungo*, *chaudhari* and *muqqddam* who assisted him in the revenue administration of the *parganas* and villages. He directly reported to the *diwan-i kul* (central *diwan*). This position of *diwan* in the *suba* independent of the governor, sometimes created administrative problems. In case the *diwan* and governor of the *suba* did not work in harmony, the administration suffered. However, this separation prevented the governor from becoming very powerful. Another *suba* level official was *bakshi* who carried out the task assigned by *Mir Bakshi*, or central *bakshi*. The representative of the central *sadr* (*Sadr us Sadr*) at the provincial level was called *sadr*. He was responsible for the welfare of those engaged in religious activities and learning. As he was considered a learned person he was entrusted with the work of judiciary and in that capacity supervised the work of *qazis* appointed at lower level administrative divisions.

In every *suba* a number of *faujdars* were appointed. From the sources it does not appear very clear whether under normal circumstances *faujdari* jurisdiction corresponded to a *sarkar*'s territorial jurisdiction. There are instances when a *faujdar* was appointed to supervise over two adjoining *sarkars* even if these belonged to two different *subas*; they were, sometimes, also appointed over areas covering a number of *parganas* within a *sarkar*. They were not only responsible to maintain law and order; they also assisted in the timely collection of revenue from their jurisdictions. They were assisted by the *amalguzar* in performing the task of revenue administration. *Faujdari* was an administrative division whereas *sarkar* was a territorial and revenue division. *Faujdars* were appointed by imperial order.

Penetration of the state authority reached to the lowest level of administrative units through various other officials, like the *kotwals* (incharge of law and order) who were appointed mainly in towns by the imperial government, *qanungos*, *amils* (revenue) etc. Even the services of the *zamindars* were utilized for the maintenance of law and order in their areas as well as in the collection of revenue. The *shiqdar* was responsible for the maintenance of law and order, administration of criminal justice and general administration of *pargana*. In Akbar's period the office of *Amin* (dealt with religious grants) and *sadar* were combined. In the 17th century *amin* was placed under the provincial *diwan* as revenue assessment officer.

The important officers of the province were appointed by imperial order. These were governor, *diwan*, *sadr*, *qazi*, *bakshi* and *muhtasib*. The subordinate officers in the *diwani* were also appointed by imperial order viz. *daroga* (superintendent) of office, *mushrif* (head clerk), *tahvildar-i-daftarkhana* (treasurer of office). The *waqianavis* were posted in the provinces and kept the emperor informed of the happenings there.

21.9 SUMMARY

Seen in its totality it comes out very clearly that Akbar undertook the onerous task of building an empire by engaging competent and experienced persons from various areas

of specialisation to frame and execute innovative systems of governance. When needed, he did not hesitate to adopt measures initiated by earlier rulers. He, however, fine-tuned them through long surveys and deliberations to make them acceptable, transparent and effective instruments of administration. Thus, without resorting to coercive methods, he maximised the resource potential of the state. These were implemented, through a transparent hierarchical machinery, to organise a distinctly subordinate and cohesive nobility out of heterogeneous social groups to supervise and maintain the territorial integrity of the Mughal state. However, his successors do not seem to have had either his calibre or foresight. They did not to challenge the root cause and instead took recourse to such measures that at best could provide temporary relief to the ailing systems of governance.

21.10 EXERCISES

- 1) Discuss the working of the mansab system under the Mughals.
- 2) Describe the central and provincial administration of the Mughals.



UNIT 22 18TH CENTURY SUCCESSOR STATES

Structure

- 22.1 Introduction
- 22.2 Bengal's Unique Position as a Mughal Province
- 22.3 Mughal Administration in Bengal in the 18th century: Role of *Zamindars*, *Jagirdars*, *Mansabdars* etc.
- 22.4 Murshid Quli Khan: Administrative Measures
- 22.5 Later *Nazims*
- 22.6 Mughal Administration in Hyderabad: Role of Provincial Governors between 1707-1724
- 22.7 Administrative System in Deccan under the Mughals and the Nizam
 - 22.7.1 Some important Officers: *Subedar*, *Diwan* and *Wakil*
 - 22.7.2 Local Administration
 - 22.7.3 Nobility
 - 22.7.4 Revenue Administration
- 22.8 The Development of a New *Subedari*: Awadh
- 22.9 Mughal Administration in Awadh 1707-1722
 - 22.9.1 *Zamindar* Rebellions
 - 22.9.2 *Madad-i-mash* Grant Holders
 - 22.9.3 Loyal *Zamindars*
 - 22.9.4 Changes in *Jagir* Administration
- 22.10 Nawabi Rule in Awadh – 1722-54
 - 22.10.1 *Jagir* Administration
 - 22.10.2 *Faujdari* Administration
 - 22.10.3 Role of *Zamindars*
 - 22.10.4 Role of *Madad-i-mash* Holders
- 22.11 Summary
- 22.12 Exercises

22.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit, we will discuss the administrative and institutional structure of the successor states, which emerged as a consequence of the decline of the Mughal power. These states were Bengal, Hyderabad and Awadh. The process and transformation leading to the emergence as autonomous units from the position of *subas* of the Mughal Empire will be highlighted. The continuity with the classical Mughal administrative system and the changes introduced will also be analysed. The study of these regional states or successor states would help us to understand how the regional dynamics of polity, economy and society operated within and later outside the Mughal imperial framework.

22.2 BENGAL'S UNIQUE POSITION AS A MUGHAL PROVINCE

During the Mughal period as a frontier province Bengal had not been totally incorporated into the classical Mughal system of administration. Raja Todarmal, Akbar's finance Minister had brought out a revenue settlement for Bengal which was quite different from the system prevalent in upper India. The settlement was based on the system prevalent in the past especially the records of the Afghan period. New measurements of the landholders possessions and new calculation of state demand were not done. The ability of the peasants to pay revenue was also not scrutinized. Bengal's position as a

Mughal province was unique since the Mughals did not attempt to carry out village wise measurement and direct state appropriation before the 18th century. This is clearly demonstrated from the statistics related to Aurangzeb's reign. In Bengal only 1538 out of 112,788 villages had been measured for the state's revenue fixation whereas in the central provinces 93% of the villages had undergone measurement for fixing the state demand.

The revenue administration in large areas of Bengal was carried out through the intermediaries e.g. hereditary rajas, chiefs and landholders and Mughal officials viz. *jagirdars*, *amils* and *qanungoes*. Due to incorporation of new territorial areas into Bengal and a fresh fixation of demand in 1658 Bengal's revenue assessment in the late years of Aurangzeb's reign was higher than the previous settlement made by Todarmal in 1582. However, this rise was much less than the average increase in the rest of the empire. Historians like Irfan Habib, are of the opinion that the state demand was not as land tax but as tribute.

In the 17th century Bengal the state's revenue collection fell and it was much less as compared to other provinces of the empire. The political situation in Bengal was peaceful after the subjugation of the refractory landed chiefs by the Mughal forces. Population had increased and large areas of land had been brought under plough. The economy of Bengal received a major impetus with the rise in demand for Bengal's cotton, silk and food items in the European and Asian countries. The underpaid but skilled artisans played an important role in giving a boost to trading activities. The European trading companies and the Mughal authorities tried to derive benefit from the trade which led to silver imports into India.

Though the economy of Bengal was thriving however this prosperity did not get reflected in the living standard of artisans, peasants etc. The economic prosperity in Bengal was offset by the growth in population and the appropriation of large amounts of money by Mughal officials in Bengal (through agriculture, trade and also illegal claims).

It is important to point out that in the 18th century Bengal the power of the Mughal *mansabdars* (Mughal officials who had *jagirs* in Bengal) was weakened vis-à-vis *zamindars*. This was due to the fact that less land had been assigned in *Jagir*. Bengal's unique position as a province of Mughal empire was because the revenue demand since Akbar's time had not been revised through actual measurement. Though production had increased (increase in cultivation) but revenue remitted to Delhi was in accordance with the older rates of demand whereas the actual collection (through field collection) was more than the official rate of demand. This difference was not reflected in the Mughal revenue statistics and was appropriated by the hierarchy of officials: *mansabdar*/*Jagirdar*, *zamindar*, *amil*, *qanungo* etc.

22.3 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION IN BENGAL IN THE 18TH CENTURY: ROLE OF ZAMINDARS, JAGIRDARS, MANSABDARS, ETC.

The administration of late Mughal Bengal was under the charge of a Governor (*Nazim*) and *Diwan*. Both were appointed by the Emperor and the *Diwan* acted as a curb on the Governor's power. *Nazim* was accountable for law and order administration and *Diwan* for revenue and judicial administration. Murshid Quli Khan became the *Diwan* of Bengal in 1700. He combined the office of *Diwan* and *Nazim* from 1716 till 1727 and established the rule of the Nawabs of Bengal. In the heyday of Mughal power the administration of the province was carried out thus: it was divided into *sarkar* placed under a *faujdar*; who was directly appointed by the center and was responsible for maintaining law and order whereas the *amil* performed the role of revenue collector; the *Sarkars* were further divided into *parganas* where the *qanungoes* functioned as accountants. At the village level *Patwari* carried out the task of keeping accounts.

The Mughal administration in Bengal was characterised by a specific trait. A very small part of the province was entrusted to transferable imperial officials. During Aurangzeb's reign 4/5th of the empire had been granted as *jagirs* in lieu of salary to *mansabdars*. The revenue collected from the *jagirs* was utilized to provide for the personal expenses of the official, to maintain troops and to organise the judicial, executive and revenue administration. In Bengal only 1/3rd of the total revenue was collected from *jagir* assignments. The rest of the amount (2/3rd) was collected by the hereditary *zamindars* and chiefs from the Khalisa land to be deposited in the provincial treasury from where it was transferred to the imperial treasury. Theoretically the Mughals had developed a very fine system of checks and balances to monitor the *zamindars* in the khalisa lands. *Faujdar*s (military commanders) were appointed in several places to keep an eye on the refractory *zamindars*. The *faujdar*s were supposed to ensure that the *zamindars* did not try to enhance their jurisdiction and power by building forts and indulging in unauthorized activities such as mobilizing and maintaining troops. The Governor also depended on record keepers (*qanungos*) and revenue officers (*amils*) to control the *zamindars*. The *qanungo*'s duty was to keep a detailed description (account) of records of cultivation and revenue. It was a hereditary post and each fiscal unit (paragana) in Bengal had 1 or 2 *qanungoes*. Theoretically they provided useful assistance to the Provincial *Diwan* to audit accounts, and give information on local customs to check malpractices in revenue collection. Before the appointment of Murshid Kuli Khan as *Diwan* to Bengal the *jagirs* of the Mughal *mansabdars* were transferred after 3 or 4 years. The assignment of the *mansabdars* was transferable and, they depended on the local subordinate officers, eg. *amil* and *qanungoes* for collection of revenue and maintenance of accounts. The hereditary *zamindars* represented the traditional local revenue collecting and paying agency.

The province of Bengal did not witness any major confrontation between the *mansabdars* and the *zamindars*. The reason for the non-occurrence of this problem could be located in the few number of *mansabdars* and *jagirs* in Bengal and the low jama (revenue) assessment. This was a period of crisis especially is the working of the *jagir* system in the Empire, when the Empire's revenue collection was at a precariously low level since most of the land had been assigned in *jagirs*. Therefore, Murshid Quli Khan tried to crush the *mansabdars* and enhance the power of some of the *zamindars*. He had the consent of the Emperor in his attempt to bring order to the revenue administration of the province. He was an adept revenue administrator and very soon the province was in a position to transmit 1 crore each year to the imperial treasury. The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 was a watershed in the history of 18th century Bengal. Murshid Quli Khan was free to govern Bengal in his own way since the imperial power at the center had also weakened.

22.4 MURSHID QULI KHAN: ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

Murshid Quli Khan took several measures to streamline revenue administration in Bengal. The *zamindars* who were defaulters were sternly dealt with. Several villages were measured and assessed afresh. Revenue officers collected revenue from the *zamindaris*. Due to his strict policy the annual revenue collection increased. He introduced a new settlement in 1722 for his province. This was higher than the previous settlement of 1656. The *jagirs* of imperial *mansabdars* were transferred to Orissa although Murshid Quli Khan did oblige his relatives from Persia by assigning them *jagirs* and offices. Thus the land assigned in *jagir* decreased and Khalisa land increased thereby reducing the threat from the Imperial *mansabdars* whose power was crushed. Steps were taken to decrease the size of the imperial forces and their perks and allowances were also slashed. To further weaken the *mansabdars*, Murshid Quli Khan was able to secure sufficient revenue to be sent to the imperial treasury and could ensure a friendly and cooperative attitude of the imperial government towards Bengal. The reason for

transferring and removing imperial *mansabdars* may be seen as a step towards consolidating his power in Bengal and reforming the revenue administration. After 1713 the Emperor did not transfer *mansabdars* to Bengal. This policy was meant to improve the revenue administration so that sufficient funds could be made available to the emperor for his campaign against the Marathas.

Bengal's agrarian relations were transformed due to Murshid Quli Khan's policy which permitted some landholders to confiscate the lands of others thereby increasing the size of the holdings. Earlier several small *zamindaris* had existed but now a few extensive *zamindaris* predominated. Murshid Quli Khan also granted *ijaradari* rights for collection of revenue. The revenue farmers generally hailed from the category whose relatives had in the recent past held posts related to revenue administration in the provincial government. Every revenue farmer was expected to have a *malzamin* or security. This security was often represented by a banker (e.g. Jagat Seth banking house) who undertook to vouch on behalf of the revenue farmer for a small commission. Tax collection through trade and agriculture were either managed by the *zamindars* or through contracts with revenue farmers who pledged to raise a certain sum from specific areas. Murshid Quli also appointed Hindu *Mutasaddis* (revenue administrators) in his treasury at the capital. They were also posted in districts as *amils* and local *Diwans*.

During Murshid Quli Khan's period some *zamindars* and *ijaradars* were allowed to encroach upon and confiscate the lands held by others. The extension of *zamindaris* was made possible through military force, transfer and purchase. All these methods were made legitimate by Murshid Quli Khan. It is clear that stress was laid on making the process of revenue collection more organised and efficient by introducing measurement for working out the jama and hasil. The *Zamindars* and *ijaradars* who did not delay payments and who had the support of the banking houses were given preference and were allowed to acquire large *zamindaris*. These measures improvised the revenue administration. The local *zamindars* were favoured as compared to the Mughal *mansabdars*. The gradual decline of imperial authority after 1707 had weakened the control of Delhi over the provinces. This was reflected in the autonomy gained by Bengal under Murshid Quli Khan.

The comparative peace and stability in Bengal can be attributed to Murshid Quli Khan's policies. The task of revenue collection was entrusted to the Hindu *zamindars* in the western part, in the eastern and northern part the *jagirdars* and the small Hindu and Muslims *zamindars* were employed. The Marwari Hindu banking house of Jagat Seth performed the task of bankers, minting money and remitting revenue to Delhi. The posts in the sphere of military administration were assigned to Murshid Quli Khan's Shia relatives from Persia whereas posts in the revenue administration were given to Bengali Muslims and other Hindus. Thus various kinds of ethnic groups were incorporated in the administrative machinery. This was the scenario before the Maratha attack of 1740's.

The large estates and *zamindaris* in Bengal came into existence in the mid and late 18th century during the period of Murshid Quli Khan. It has been explained how new big *zamindaris* were created in the time of Murshid Quli Khan. In 1728 Bengal's paraganas (fiscal units) were readjusted around the big *zamindaris*. The four large *zamindaris* were Burdwan, Dinajpur, Nadia and Rajshahi. These provided the highest revenue assessment in Bengal. These *zamindaris* were now virtually the autonomous domain of the *zamindars* who had now acquired the nomenclature of Rajas. Out of these four *zamindars* the Rajas of two were non-Bengali Hindus whereas the Rajas of the other two *zamindaris* were Bengali Brahmins. The ancestors of these four big *zamindars* or rajas had a modest background as revenue or administrative personnel. These big *zamindaris* now accounted for a third of Bengal's jama in 1728.

J.N. Sarkar describes these new big *zamindars* as "a new landed aristocracy" and assigns their genesis to the policies of Murshid Quli Khan. Philip Calkins considers the

rise of *zamindars* and Hindu officials and bankers as the formation of “a regionally oriented ruling group”. The curbing of the power of the Mughal (*mansabdars*) and their elimination in the regional power struggle created a new group of regional elites (including domiciled elites) in whose hands power, wealth and status were vested. These big *zamindars* were now on equal footing with the Mughal governor and in their administrative capacity they commanded small contingents (troops), administered justice, built palaces, forts, temples, etc. These Rajas were transformed from traditional landholders to administrative appointees to the realm of local kingship.

22.5 LATER NAZIMS

The reorganisation of the *zamindaris* initiated by Murshid Quli Khan in the Nawabi period continued during the company rule. The *nazim* of Bengal who succeeded Murshid Quli Khan (Shijauddin Khan; Mushid Quli Khan’s son-in-law) continued with the policy adopted by his predecessor and introduced a new revenue settlement for Bengal in 1728. The increase in actual collection by 9% in 1722 was reasonable if we take into consideration the inflation and population increase. This was the increase or the target achieved by Murshid Quli Khan. However, Shujauddin (1727-39) and Alivardi Khan (1740-51, he became governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1740) also exacted *abwabs* (additional cesses). This proved ruinous for the peasantry. Thus the three *nazims* Murshid, Shujauddin and Alivardi increased the pre-1722 jama by 40% through their administrative measures. During Shujauddin’s and Alivardi’s tenure revenue was collected through the big *zamindars* in western Bengal and smaller *zamindars* in other areas. The *abwabs* imposed by the later *nazims* led to an increase in the *zamindar*’s profits but had a detrimental effect on the peasants whose rents increased by 50%. British observers (James Grant studied the fiscal system of Bengal and John Shore wrote on the role of zamindars) did not speak highly of the imposition of *abwabs* because their extraction was not based on the actual produce of land.

The alliance between the governor and the loyal *zamindars* was strengthened during the time of Shujauddin (1727-39). An important feature of his tenure was the subjugation of Bihar. The stern regime of Murshid Quli Khan gave way to leniency under Shujauddin. Some defaulters who had been arrested by Murshid Quli Khan were granted pardon and these *zamindars* were also provided a *khilat* (robe of honour) according to their status and were made to sign written bonds regarding payment of revenue through the banking house of Jagat Seth. They were to provide *nazr* (offerings) to the *nazim*. Although a lenient policy was adopted towards the “interior” (central) *zamindars* Shujauddin tried to tighten his grip over the chiefs stationed in Bengal’s outlying areas.

Alivardi Khan was Shijauddin’s Deputy in Bihar and seized power in 1740. His position was however sanctioned by Emperor Muhammad Shah. In the period of Alivardi Khan a new trend of withdrawing the remittances to the imperial treasury was started during the period of Maratha incursions and it continued till the invasions stopped in 1751. Thus now a major portion of the state’s revenue was hoarded or utilized within the provinces. Non-payment to the central treasury benefited the provincial government and half of the Alivardi’s *jama* was saved annually. However, the *Nazims* and their relatives continued to amass huge fortunes for themselves. This wealth was sometimes ploughed back into the economic cycle so it did not always hinder the economic activities. This money was however not utilized in welfare activities such as flood control, irrigation, building roads, relief measures in the wake of disaster etc. So it never percolated down for the benefit of the peasants and artisans.

From the above account we get an idea about the administrative policy of Murshid Quli Khan especially his revenue reforms, which brought about a new revenue settlement in 1722. He successfully curbed the power of the Mughal *mansabdars/jagirdars* by

transferring their *jagirs* to Orissa. The recalcitrant *zamindars* were punished. More land was brought under *Khalisa*. His measures resulted in the creation of large *zamindaris* in Bengal. He also promoted *ijaradari* and through these measures he was able to increase the revenue collection and remitted huge amounts to Delhi. His successor carried forward his policy and introduced another revenue settlement for Bengal. However he initiated the policy of imposing *abwabs* and granted pardon to the “defiant” *zamindars* (of Murshid Quli Khan’s period). But the policy of alliance with the “loyal” *zamindars* was furthered though the *zamindars* in the outlying provinces were brought under close scrutiny. The revenue collection increased and remittances to Delhi continued.

Alivardi Khan’s period was important since it represented the total erosion of Mughal authority in Bengal. He appointed his *naibs* or deputies in Patna, Cuttuck and Dhaka (eastern Bengal). He also appointed *faujdar*s in certain places. However, the *faujdar*s of Purnea had become independent of the Nawab which indicates the decay of *faujdar* system. *Mutaseddis* (mainly Hindu revenue administrators) had been appointed since the period of Murshid Quli Khan to manage the Treasury or *Khalsa* at Murshidabad. They were also sent to the districts to collect revenue as *amils* or local *diwans*. Alivardi established an army comprising of Pathans, upcountry sepoys and cavalry. Within the *zamindaris* militia or forces maintained by *zamindar* through lands assigned to them in villages performed the policing, judicial and law and order related functions. Security and peace were therefore of utmost importance for ensuring proper functioning of revenue collection process. Initially to get recognition from the Emperor heavy payments were made in favour of Delhi. However, payments had decreased or stopped during the Maratha invasion of Bengal. Imperial authority in Bengal had suffered a setback but nominal allegiance to the Mughal power continued. In the mid 18th century in Dacca there existed several small tenure holders called talukdars. They paid revenue either straight to the government or through the agency of *zamindars*. These rights originated due to settlement of new lands or sale of existing *zamindari* rights for money or out of “older” rights finding place in the new *zamindari*.

The study of the Mughal province of Bengal which moved slowly towards autonomy under the Nawabs or *Nazims* helps us to understand the dynamics of the alliance between the loyal *zamindars*, Nawabs and the Mughal aristocracy (only in the initial phase; period of Murshid Quli Khan). *Zamindar* rebellions and defiance were a threat which the Nawabs tried to prevent and solve by adopting suitable measures. The peace and security and smooth flow of revenue was related to cordial relations with the *zamindars*. The bankers gave loan on interest to the *zamindars* and the Nawabs for defraying their expenses. Bankers (*mahajans*) dealt in currency and bills of exchange for remitting funds to central treasury and Delhi. Merchants’ buying capacity made it possible for peasants to pay in cash. They promoted cultivation of cash crops on which higher tax could be imposed. Merchants procured silver for Bengal’s currency through trading activities. Thus the 18th century political system in Bengal was delicately balanced on a partnership between merchants, bankers, *zamindars* and Nawabs.

22.6 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION IN HYDERABAD: ROLE OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS BETWEEN 1707-1724

Aurangzeb’s death in 1707 was marked by war of succession. Kam Baksh the youngest of the contestants for the crown declared himself ruler of Golconda after Bahadur Shah’s accession to the Mughal throne. Earlier Aurangzeb had appointed Jan Sipar Khan as the governor of Hyderabad. However, after his death prince Muhammad Kam Baksh was made the governor of Hyderabad. Jan Sipar Khan’s son Rustam Dil Khan was made the deputy governor of Hyderabad. This measure represented a major

shift in the Mughal policy of not converting the offices of governor etc. into hereditary assignments. Muhammad Kam Baksh acted as an absentee governor and held *jagirs* in Hyderabad and appointed his men to manage his possessions. In 1703 Aurangzeb had removed Rustam Dil Khan from deputy governorship of Hyderabad and had sent him to the coastal districts. Sayyid Muzaffar Khan was made the new deputy governor of Hyderabad. Rustam Dil Khan had incurred the Emperor's displeasure and now an attempt was made to strengthen the hands of Kam Baksh to establish effective Mughal control over Hyderabad. In 1705 Sayyid Muzaffar Khan was removed and Daud Khan Panni (the Afghan *mansabdar*) was appointed as the deputy governor of Hyderabad. Very soon Rustam Dil Khan was reinstated as the deputy governor of Hyderabad due to Daud Khan Panni's ineffectiveness.

Till Aurangzeb's death Rustam Dil Khan was not able to directly oppose Kam Baksh but as deputy governor of Hyderabad he tried to consolidate his position by amassing personal fortunes. He was not a loyalist as far as Mughal imperial power was concerned and he tried to enter into negotiations and compromises with the rivals of the Mughals. He had been reappointed as the deputy governor on account of his long association with the region. It was felt that his experiences would help in strengthening the imperial control but it seems that this step proved detrimental. The earlier policy of frequent transfer had prevented the officers from developing vested interests in the region. It had restrained them from turning rebellious. This was important for maintaining the stability of the empire and for efficient functioning of the centralised administrative control and system. Around the time of Aurangzeb's death in 1707 Rustam had been in Hyderabad for several years. His political acumen, his long familiarity and association with the region and his official status helped him to create a new kind of independent and autonomous political order in the event of decline of the Mughal power.

In 1707 the hold of the imperial administration over the province was weakening and the officials in charge of the administration in the provinces strengthened their position. Emperor Bahadur Shah was compelled to appease Rustam Khan since he did not trust Kam Baksh. Rustam Khan was bestowed honours and his rank was elevated. This was in conformity with the acceptance of the hereditary principle in administration which had earlier been deliberately avoided and ignored to strengthen a centralised administrative system.

Rustam Khan had emerged as a strong factor in the provincial administration but not strong enough to defy Kam Baksh or the imperial power. He was ultimately executed by Kam Baksh. On account of lack of coordination between the Empire and the province it became difficult to effectively control the provincial administration. The governor's hold over the provincial officials also became weak. The chaos encouraged the various sections to take advantage of the situation. Thus tax payments were not remitted, villages were "raided", internecine conflicts took place and Mughal authority was challenged. Rustam tried to forge alliances with non-official groups eg. rebellious leaders (ex-Mughal *faujdar*s, etc.) to strengthen his position as a regional political figure. In 1708 the prestige and power of the Mughals was still strong enough to resist attempts by officials to ignore Mughal authority. The relations between the Emperor Bahadur Shah and Prince Kam Baksh were not very cordial and the prince was not able to establish effective control over the administration in Hyderabad. There was widespread resistance to Mughal power and *zamindars* marauded villages, refused to pay taxes and indulged in factional conflicts. The period of Rustam and Kam Baksh was marked by rapacity and breakdown of imperial provincial administration in Golconda. Therefore, Yusuf Khan (the Afghan *mansabdar*) was appointed by the Emperor as the governor of Hyderabad. The province had posed a substantial threat to imperial power and restoring order was a difficult task for the new governor of the province. Before the 18th century the social organisation of the province comprised of Muslim gentry (*ulema*, officials, merchants) in towns, Telugu warrior aristocracy who enjoyed military power, hereditary local officials (*deshmukhs* and *muriwars*) who held authority over the rural areas and Mughal officials

(town officials, fort commanders and *faujdar*s) who commanded the military contingents. It is generally held that the partnership between the military chiefs (*nayaks*) and the Mughal administration was fragile and the provincial administration was generally characterized by divergence of interests between Mughal imperial power and local aristocracy. However, Yusuf Khan's period was represented by an alliance between Mughal administration and local *nayaks*. Still he did not prove to be a successful administrator and the provincial administration of Hyderabad failed to streamline the fiscal system and sufficient revenues could not be arranged for local and central administration. The structure of revenue administration was based on a link between the local *deshmukhs* or hereditary tax collectors and provincial treasury. This structure was very delicate. During this period it developed several cracks. Around 1709 most of the *zamindars* were 3-4 years in arrears on tax commitments. The traditional tax paying agencies *zamindars*, *rajas*, *deshmukhs* and village headmen resorted to tax evasion. Yusuf Khan's governorship proved disastrous for the province, which was on the verge of bankruptcy.

In 1712 Ibrahim Khan was appointed as governor of Hyderabad. In this period the Mughal officers were transformed from their respectable appointments to mere marauding agents and their soldiers and armies represented mercenary groups. This picture gives the gist of the total collapse of provincial and imperial administration in the province.

Thus the imperial and provincial administration suffered a setback in the 18th century. The powers and position of the Mughal officials were eroded and bandits and Telugu warriors enhanced their activities. The chaos was reflected in the increasing lawlessness which made the life of ordinary peasants, artisans and merchants unsafe and uncertain.

In the period between 1713-24 Mubariz Khan was made governor of Hyderabad. He was a Turani officer. He tried to reestablish the glory and power of the provincial government which had suffered a tremendous setback in the past years. Another significant contribution made by this historical figure was that after his defeat at the hands of the first Nizam Asaf Jah he bestowed upon the latter an organized political structure which was the forerunner of the future independent Muslim kingdom or successor state. The *farman* of Emperor Farrukhsiyar gave the governorship of Hyderabad to Mubariz Khan. He was also conferred the *faujdar*i of Muhammadnagar. All the districts administered by the previous governor and certain coastal districts were placed under him. His *mansab* (rank) was also elevated. He was directed to reorganise the provincial administration in Hyderabad. The *farman* categorically indicated that the districts of Musulipatnam, Nizampatnam, Sikakul, Rajmundry, Elum, Kondapalli, Kondavidu, Khammamet and the diamond mines categorised as *khalisa* could not be given as *jagirs*. Around 17 sub districts were controlled by the governor. He had to contend with the power of the warrior chiefs (*nayaks*) and the provincial *diwan* in charge of *Khalisa* lands. There was a tussle for supremacy between the governor, provincial *diwan* and the *zamindars* also.

In 1713 Nizam-ul-mulk became the viceroy of the six provinces of the Deccan. The Nizam seemed to be a loyal imperial official interested in safeguarding imperial power in the Deccan. The western part of the Deccan was being destroyed by the Maratha chiefs, bandits and revenue collectors. Through his diplomacy and military acumen he was able to reduce them to submission. Towards the eastern part of the Deccan in Hyderabad Nizam was favourably inclined towards the provincial *diwan* due to his conflict with Mubariz over the control of coastal *khalisa* districts. In 1715 the Nizam was removed from the position of viceroy of Deccan and he was replaced by Husain Ali Khan the Sayid brother who had placed Farukhsiyar on the throne of Delhi. The new viceroy faced hostility on reaching the Deccan and the Emperor secretly connived with the local officials and imperial officers in resisting the new viceroy. He had been

invested with enormous powers in the sphere of provincial administration. He could appoint, transfer, and remove provincial *Diwans* and commanders of strategic fortresses. These powers had earlier been the preserve of the emperor. Although he possessed tremendous power but the clandestine conspiracies of the imperial officials and the factional power struggle at the imperial court subverted his authority. Both Husain Ali and Mubariz Khan tried to form an alliance in the era of instability. Mubariz succeeded in securing the status of *Diwan* of all the territories in Hyderabad. His son was made the commander of the Golconda fort. Thus the special powers granted to Husain Ali by the emperor were used to win over the loyalty of Mubariz and thereby the central control (military and fiscal) over the Hyderabad province was further weakened. The position of Mubariz was further strengthened when the governor of Bijapur, Bijapur Karnatik and Hyderabad Karnatic also defied Husain Ali Khan's power and allied with the emperor. Though this was a period of instability and chaos but the imperial power and prestige had not totally collapsed and the symbols of royal power and authority and legitimacy continued to be used as a source of legal sanction by authorities at the provincial/local level. Mubariz Khan's tenure witnessed the suppression of the local *zamindars* and the Marathas. In the 18th century the position of the viceroy of the Deccan had become a very attractive proposition for the nobles. After the death of Emperor Farrukhsiyar Nizam-ul-mulk, the Turani noble, was removed from the governorship of Malwa by the Sayid brothers. The Nizam decided to shift to the Deccan due to offer of the alliance with the Marathas (of Kolhapur group) and Mubariz Khan (who was not favourably inclined towards the Sayid). The expedition of the Nizam to the Deccan against the Sayid brother (Viceroy) was historic as this victory established the undisputed supremacy of Nizam-ul-mulk in the whole Deccan. Around this time the Sayid brother died and Nizam's uncle became the Wazir at Delhi.

Now a situation had arisen when the two nobles (the Nizam and Mubariz Khan) in their struggle for supremacy had become rivals. The Nizam wished to be the supreme lord of the entire Deccan whereas Mubariz was simply trying to preserve his power in the province of Hyderabad. Thus clash was bound to occur. However, it was averted for sometime due to the appointment of Nizam as the imperial *wazir*. The Nizam tried to pressurize Mubariz (governor) to pay his outstanding dues and tried to transfer him when he failed to pay his dues. In this period it was not easy to make the local/provincial officers obey orders and therefore, armed action was resorted to. In 1725 after defeating Mubariz Khan Hyderabad was taken over by the Asaf Jahi dynasty. Nizam was appointed *subedar* of the Deccan by the Emperor Muhammad Shah.

22.7 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM IN THE DECCAN UNDER THE MUGHALS AND THE NIZAM

The Deccan was divided into six *subas* and the *subas* were further sub-divided into *sarkars*, *mahals*, *parganas* and *dehs* (villages) for administrative convenience. Various sources in the state archives of Hyderabad pertaining to Aurangzeb's time or later give us information about the administrative structure of the Deccan from the period of Aurangzeb to that of Nizam. The six *subas* of the Deccan in this period were Aurangabad, Muhammadabad, Khandesh, Berar, Bijapur and Hyderabad. The *suba* comprised of a number of *faujdaris* and *sarkars*. The *sarkar* was formed by combining many *parganas* (also referred to as *mahals* in fiscal terminology). A group of *deh* or small territorial units (or mauza) formed a *pargana* or *mahal*. Dr. M.A. Nayeem in his "*Mughal Administration in Deccan under Nizam-ul-mulk, Asaf Jah (1710-48 AD)*" on the basis of the manuscript sources gives a table showing the total number of administrative units of the six *subas* of the Deccan.

<i>Subas</i>		<i>Deh-be-Dehi</i>		<i>Sawane-i-Deccan</i>	
		No. of <i>Sarkars</i>	No. of <i>Parganas</i>	No. of <i>Sarkars</i>	No. of <i>Parganas</i>
1.	Aurangabad	12	138	12	147
2.	Bidar	7	76	6	76
3.	Khandesh	4	134	6	136
4.	Berar	11	202	11	252
5.	Darul Zafar Bijapur	18	281	17	252
6.	Hyderabad	42	405	43	410

Each of the six *subas* of the Deccan had a capital or headquarter. However there was only one regional capital located initially at Aurangabad but later shifted to Hyderabad. Thus the structure of the administrative system of the Mughal Deccan was vertically arranged into six categories: capital of six *subas*, *faujdaris*, *sarkars*, *parganas*, *dehs* (villages). The forts and *mandis* were also components of a *mahal*. In the 18th century it had become a practice to combine the *faujdari* with the *subedari*. This is best illustrated in the career of Nizam who was given the *subedari* of Deccan together with *faujdari* of Karnataka in 1713. The *faujdaris* were also combined with the offices of *amin* and *shiqdar*. Thus Mughal Deccan was a big region and its *subedari* was further parceled out into several *naib subedaris*. The office of the *Diwan* of the Deccan supervised the six *Diwans* subordinate to him. The main officers of the provincial administration were the (1) *Subedar*, (2) *Diwan*, (3) *Bakshi*, (4) *Qazi* and (5) *Kotwal*, etc. They were supported by the offices of *naibs* or deputies. At the lower level (*sarkar*) the administrative head was the *faujdar*. Another provincial office was that of the *amil* or *amalguzar*. Apart from these other offices existed such as those of the *kotwal*, *qazi* and *bakshi*. The *pargana* was under the charge of a *shiqdar*. It also had separate *amil* and *qazi*.

22.7.1 Some Important Officers: *Subedar*, *Diwan* and *Wakil*

The *sipah salar* or *subedar* was the most important officer in the Deccan. The next important office in the provincial administration was that of the *diwan*. These two officers were mainly responsible for the smooth functioning of the administrative system. The *subedar* was incharge of the executive, military, criminal and judicial administration. The *diwan* was entrusted with the task of revenue administration. Initially the provincial *diwan* was appointed by the imperial court and was accountable directly to the central *diwan*. Nizam-ul-mulk brought about a major change in this system. He himself appointed the provincial *diwan* in 1721 and later removed him. Thus a new precedent was established and the *subedar*'s position was strengthened since he could now appoint and remove the *diwan* without reference to the imperial court. Similarly the *bakshi* who had earlier owed his position to the imperial court was now directly under the control of the *subedar*. An important feature of the administration was the *mansabdari* system. Hierarchical rank or *mansab* was accorded to officials and their ceremonial position was based on the rank they had been assigned. They were paid either in the form of *jagir-tankhwah* or in cash *tankhwah* every month which they obtained via the *wakils* from the *mustasaddis* (Hindu revenue administrators). The *mansabdars* held important posts in the administration. Sometimes a *mansabdar* held many offices viz. executive, revenue and military.

It seems that the *wakils* played an important role in the administration of Deccan. Some *wakils* were the representatives of the local powers in the regions such as the Marathas or the Nawab of Arcot. They enjoyed the patronage given to them by the Nizam and the nobility and served as their agents at the court. The local *wakils* received patronage from the Nizam as well as the nobles in the Nizam's administration at

Hyderabad. Most of the nobles had *wakils* to transact business with a Nizam. These *wakils* (external) provided employment to many in their master's estates. They were also granted *jagirs* by the Nizam. *Wakils* of Peshwa, Scindia, Holkar (Maratha chiefs) and British residents were prominent among them. The Samasthans (Hindu royal houses) who had acquired this position from the previous Deccani rulers (Bahmani, Vijayanagar), continued to exist in the Nizam's dominions especially in Telingana and Sholapur. They were tributaries of the Nizam and maintained their links through *wakils* at the Hyderabad court.

Let us now discuss the nature of administrative organisation in the lower tiers of administrative hierarchy. The *sarkar* or *pargana* or *mahal* can be categorized as both administrative and revenue division. The *sarkar* was headed by a *faujdar*. His prime responsibility was to look after the law and order situation in the area. He had under his control troops which could be used in times of emergency to suppress rebellions and ensure peace and stability. He also supervised the *thanas*, which were placed under the *thanadars*. It was his job to ensure prevention of crime and lawlessness on highways roads and elsewhere. He was also supposed to obstruct the collection of illegal cesses by strong measures. He had to keep an eye on the *zamindars* who built fortifications under their charge or tried to renovate old fortifications. The production of guns and ammunition was also to be strictly supervised by him. He also assisted the *amalguzgar* in carrying out the task of revenue administration. The refractory *zamindars* who refused to pay the dues were subdued.

An important office which emerged in Hyderabad by 1760 or earlier was that of the hereditary record keeper (*daftardar*). The *daftardars* were recruited from two Hindu noble families and although they were accountable to the *Diwan* but in course of time they subverted the power of the *diwan*. They kept a record of income and expenditure. They also kept an account of *jagir*, *mansab*, *inam* grants and revenue assessment and issued orders for appointment of revenue contractors and grant of *jagirs*. *Talukdars* were the revenue contractors who played an important role in the administration of the Deccan under the Nizam. They were an independent intermediary group between the *Diwan* and the local officials and operated through the agency of the *daftardars*.

22.7.2 Local Administration

The land revenue administration of the Deccan at the local level was controlled by hereditary officers. These were *sardeshmukh*, *sardeshpandia*, *deshmukh*, *deshpande*, *patwari*, *qanungo*, *muqaddam*, *deshkulkarni*, etc. The *qanungo* was the officer who kept the revenue records and he recorded the statistical details of revenue receipts. The information related to *jamabandi* of each village was gathered and recorded by him. The *amin* fixed the revenue demand but the deed containing the *jamabandi* had the signature of the *qanungo* together with the *deshmukh* and *deshpandia*. The *deshmukhs* and *deshpandias* basically held *zamindari* rights but through Mughal *farmans* they had been formally incorporated into the Mughal administration as officers who were responsible for collecting a fixed land revenue and maintaining law and order. The *zamindar* was incharge of collecting revenue and maintaining law and order and thus they were entitled to several perquisites and privileges for the various functions performed by them. An important feature of administration in the Deccan in this period was that several functions were performed by a person (official), which could range from revenue to executive to military. The practice of *ijaradari* seems to have been prevalent since there is reference to the word *ijara* (contract) in the documents of this period. A unique characteristic of the administrative system was that the appointment to certain offices (*deshkulkarni*, *muqaddam* etc.) could be obtained through the payment of *peshkash*.

22.7.3 Nobility

The nobles who were given *mansabs* by Nizam emerged as a loyal group and this was reflected in the words Asaf Jahi referred to in the seals of this period. Initially the seals mentioned the names of both the Nizam and the Mughal Emperor, which meant that the nobles were subordinate to both. However, the later seals refer to only Asaf Jahi “which indicates that the supremacy of the government in the Deccan was a foregone conclusion. *Mansabdars* were appointed to various offices viz. that of the *qiladar*. Sometimes the office of the *qiladar* combined either the *faujdari* or the *thanadari*.

Regarding the composition of the nobility Karen Leonard, *Journal of Asian Studies* (1971) p. 569-582, points out “By the late 18th century a distinctively Hyderabad nobility tied to the Nizam’s court can be discerned. Some of the men who constituted this nobility were recruited from the Mughal service, from the Maratha service and from the families traditionally associated with the Deccan Sultanates. The first Nizam’s highest *mansabdars* were almost all military commanders. There was no definite and exclusive correlation between *mansab* rank and noble status. Of the ten families consistently considered the *umra-I-azzam* or highest nobles of Hyderabad at least two or three families held only average *mansab* ranks.” The Hyderabad nobility by the late 18th century comprised of Shia Muslims and Hindus. Earlier the rulers of samasthan had occupied high position in the nobility, however, later in mid 18th century their position was taken by North Indian (kayastha and Punjabi khatri) and Maharashtrian Hindus (Chitpavan Brahmin) who had risen from low administrative positions to the status of *Daftar-I-Diwan* and *Daftar-I-Mal*. Later in the 18th century Marathas represented one of the ten families holding high noble status. Sunni were few in comparison to Shia and Hindus.

Mansab System

In the Mughal empire, the status of the nobility was related to the *mansab* (rank). Within this category, *zat* rank (personal) determined the hierarchical status of the nobles. In the classical *mansab* system *zat* rank was generally higher than *sawar* rank. Though in the Mughal system, both *zat* and *sawar* ranks were an integral part of the *mansab* system, but in reality at times the *sawar* figure did not coincide with the number of troops maintained by a *mansabdar*. In Hyderabad, *mansab* system did not provide *sawar* rank to the officials on a uniform pattern. Moreover, military officials possessed higher *sawar* ranks than civil officials. Clerical officials had no *sawar* rank but only *zat* rank. The *zat* rank indicated the hereditary occupation of the clerical official and represented a fixed salary. Promotion for these officials meant extra work and more salary as a remuneration for additional work. The person acquiring a higher administrative position would not necessarily acquire a higher *Zat mansab*. *Zat* rank was not related to a *mansabdar*’s administrative job or salary but to his ritual (ceremonial) rank. The ‘symbolic’ military character of the *mansabdari* system and the accompanying “numerical correlates” were no longer applied in Hyderabad.

Mansabs were conferred by the Nizam in the Deccan and a *mansabdar* held office at the pleasure of the Nizam. They were paid in cash or through assignment of *jagirs*. However, there was no fixed rule for increasing or decreasing the *mansab* at any point of time. The orders related to the appointment of *mansabdars* were made at the command of the Nizam and were issued by the *diwan*. *Jagirs* had been transformed into hereditary assignments from the 18th century. According to Karen Leonard “if there was a legitimate and competent heir, *jagirs* in Hyderabad stayed in the family of the original grantee.”

22.7.4 Revenue Administration

The land revenue administration during the period of Nizam was categorized into two distinct phases (1) of assessment, (2) of actual collection. The assessment of revenue

demand was done and an estimate was arrived at. On the basis of the estimate derived in the period of Aurangzeb the assessment was done by the Nizam. Thus the assessment carried out on the basis of a fixed previous years estimate (standard assessment) provided the basis of the land revenue administrative of Nizam. Since the standard assessment was not a very reliable method of assessing the demand therefore to avoid problems related to its becoming outdated and inflation, revenue was later assessed every year taking into account the actual revenue receipts and balance.

System of Land Revenue Assessment

When Murshid Quli Khan was *diwan* of a Deccan province he laid the foundation of the system of measurement for the revenue assessment of the Deccan. The rate of every crop was identified and the revenue rate per *bigha* was determined on the basis of the prices. The method of crop-sharing also existed in the Deccan. The *zamindars* were taken into confidence while making the revenue assessment.

Various Taxes

Various taxes were exacted by the Nizam in the Deccan. These can be put into two broad categories. (1) *Mal* and (2) *Wujuhat*. The *wujuhat* can be further divided into two groups (1) *jihat* (2) *sair-i-jihat*. *Mal* was the tax levied on the cultivated land. *Jihat* were the levies exacted to maintain the revenue machinery employed for assessment purposes. *Sair-i-jihat* were the cesses obtained by taxing markets and trade. The government gave irrigation facility (water tanks or reservoirs) to the villages (cultivators) and for this it charged an irrigation tax (*dasband*). In case the water tanks were privately owned government paid a charge for utilising this service.

Methods of Land Revenue Collection

During the Nizam's period revenue collection was done in two ways: either directly through the officials (*amils*) or by revenue farming. However, for collection of revenue from *khalisa* lands *karoris* were deputed. Revenue farming was practiced in *khalisa* or *jagir*.

22.8 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW *SUBEDARI*: AWADH

The disintegration of Mughal power led to the emergence of several regional states which played a crucial role in the new political milieu of the 18th century. Let us trace the history of Awadh during the Mughal period. Abul Fazl refers to the *suba* of Awadh in 1594: "Its length from the *sarkar* of Gorakhpur to Kanauj is 135 *kos* (270 miles). Its breadth from the northern mountains to... the *subah* of Allahabad is 115 *kos* (230 miles). To the east is Bihar to the north, the mountains, to the south, Manikpur; and to the west, Kanauj. Its climate is good... Its principal streams are Sarju, the Gogra, the Sai and the Gumti... Agriculture is in a flourishing state, especially rice of the kinds called *sukhdas*, *madkhar* and *jhanwah*, which for whiteness, delicacy, fragrance and wholesomeness are scarcely to be matched... In this *Subah* are five *sarkars* divided into 138 *parganas*." Awadh was divided into five *sarkars* during the Mughal period: Awadh, Gorakhpur, Bahraich, Khairabad and Lucknow.

The classical description of the Mughal *subedar* is given by Abul Fazl in the chapter on *sipahsalar* in the *Ain*. The supreme responsibility of administration of Awadh was entrusted to nazim or governor also called *subedar* whose main duties included the collection of revenue, maintenance of law and order, building and maintaining roads and communication links and providing basic military help to the Mughal emperor whenever required. The *subedar* was subordinate to the emperor and remained in the office at the will of the Emperor. It was a normal practice to transfer *subedars* after every three years. However it seems the theoretical status of the *subedar* could not always

be fully transformed into practical reality. In the 17th century the *subedar's* control was limited to the province from where he was normally transferred after every 4-5 years. The governor of a large province held a higher *mansab* and normally *subedars* were in direct contact with the Emperor and a system of checks and balances acted as a curb on their power. They were subject to scrutiny by central officials. The other officials at the provincial level were the *diwan* and the *bakshi*. The *diwan* looked after the revenue administration and was answerable to the imperial *diwan*. *Diwan* or chief revenue officer of the province was also appointed by the Emperor and owed his position to the Emperor. His duties in the capacity of the *diwan* included looking after administration of *jagirs*, making charitable grants, controlling the treasury and mint and also adjudicating disputes in revenue courts. He was also in charge of disbursing the payments to the imperial officers, expansion of cultivation and dispatching the reports related to the *subah* to the imperial *diwan*. The *bakshi* was responsible for branding of horses and verification of cavalry. He was subordinate to the Mir *Bakshi* at the center. In fact the position of the *diwan* was almost at par with the governor and acted as a restraint on his power. The *faujdar*s, *amils*, *diwans* and *waqainigars* (intelligence officers) were not appointed by the governor. The governor could not take major decisions (eg. regarding military campaigns) without the consent of the center.

In the 18th century the power configuration in the provinces underwent a change and this was reflected in the change in the status of the governor. A new type of provincial administration emerged in different states which was shaped by the political activities at the court and the increase in the governor's power in the provinces. During Bahadur Shah's reign the governor of Awadh Chin Qilich Khan (Nizam-ul-mulk) consolidated his position by acquiring a number of *faujdaris* in and outside the province. He also tried to increase his power by getting a higher *mansab*. However the above mentioned privileges did not mean that Chin Qilich Khan's (Nizam-ul-mulk) power in the *subedari* was now supreme. In fact he was able to obtain privileges because he was the leader of an important group (Turani group) at the center. In the province his power was kept in check by the *diwan* who belonged to the opposite faction (Irani faction). Muhammad Amin Khan succeeded him as *subedar* but he turned out to be an absentee *subedar* which increased the problems in the provincial administration.

New *Subedari*

The precedent of special privileges given to the *subedar* of Awadh under Chin Qilich Khan became a permanent feature of Awadh *subedari* in the 18th century. Thus the position of the governor in the 18th century was transformed. Amin Khan's successors Qilich Muhammad Khan and Sarbuland Khan were able to combine governorship of Awadh with more than one *faujdar*. The emperor bestowed additional power on the governor to quell the uprising of the *zamindars*. However the Chhabele Ram (1714-15) tried to augment his power by taking advantage of the dissensions and the divisions at the court. The clash between the Emperor (Farrukhsiyar) and *Wazir* (Sayid brother) allowed the governor to get his close associate appointed as provincial *diwan*. This depicts the loosening of centre's authority over the province since the provincial *diwan* had always acted as a curb on the power of the governor. The governor wished to augment his power by combining the two *subedaris* (of Awadh and Allahabd) and a few *faujdaris*. However imperial consent could not be obtained. During the subsequent period there was rift between the governor Muzzaffar Ali Khan and the *diwan* regarding the *sair* (taxes other than land revenue) viz. on trade etc. of the *paibaqi* (land to be assigned in *jagir*) areas in 1716. The governor thus was trying to encroach upon the power of the *diwan*. At the same time the *diwan* by acquiring *faujdar* rights was arrogating too much power for himself, which was not appreciated by the governor.

These examples are clear illustrations of the fact that there was conflict between the governor and *diwan* over administrative rights and power and also shows that the interests of the central and the provincial authority never coincided. Centre's aim was to keep in check the power of provincial authorities whereas the latter wished to acquire

more administrative rights and privileges. In fact the idea of the new *wizarat* of Sayid Abdullah Khan, the *wazir* of Farrukhsiyar was also not in conformity with the emergence of the new *subedari*. The *wazir* tried to restrict the power of the governor since any augmentation of his power was a threat to the centre. The next governor was Aziz Khan Chaghta who was the leader of the Afghans of Shahabad. The *diwan* was made the deputy *subedar* of the province. This was meant to act as a restraint on the authority of the *subedar* who was not allied to the new *wizarat*. The *wazir*'s aim was to prevent the provincial administration from becoming strong at the cost of the centre. The growth of the new *subedari* was in fact a product of the circumstances prevailing in the province at that time i.e. conflict among the various power groups in the provinces and also between center and provinces. The activities of the *wazir* to weaken the power of provincial governor and attempts to sap his energies by engaging him in conflict with the provincial *diwan* could not have helped in strengthening imperial power. The *wazir* was merely guided by the narrow aim of safeguarding the interests of a section of nobility to maintain his power.

Aziz was replaced by the *wazir* due to fear of threat to his power. The governorship went to two of the *wazir*'s close associates Khan Zaman and Mahabat Khan (December 1717 – February 1718) (February 1718). In 1719 Muhammad *Amin* Khan was appointed governor of Awadh. However he did not take charge of the governorship as directed by the imperial centre. He was an aspirant for the *wizarat* and had conspired against the *wazir*. Earlier too Awadh had been subject to absentee governorship in 1718. All these developments show that there was a sharp divide between the emperor and the nobility and between the center and the provinces. This naturally had its implications in the form of strained and weakened centre – province relationship. In 1719 the governor of Allahabad (Giridhar Bahadur, nephew of Chhable Ram) rebelled against the Sayyids. Although he surrendered to the imperial power but on his own terms. The fort of Allahabad was handed over to the imperial authorities but he was granted the governorship of Awadh together with the office of *diwan* and *faujdar* of the province. The fort of Allahabad was of strategic importance since it was located on the road which was used for the transport of remittances from Bengal to imperial court. The governor of Allahabad in return for the surrender of the fort was able to wrest or secure the *subedari* of Awadh. The chief features of the new *subedari* were; extensive tenure, absolute power in financial administration and military sphere. This new trend of combining of *subedari* and *faujdar* had emerged in the late 17th century and early 18th century. This phenomenon was a response to the *zamindars* disturbances in this period. As a measure of administrative convenience and security and stability *faujdaris* were jointly held with the *subedaris* or were granted to the close associates of the governor. The assumption of the office of *diwan* by the *subedar* was intended to keep an eye on the grant of *jagirs* and revenue resources of the province. In this period the *jagirdars* had forcibly acquired *faujdar* rights over their *jagirs*. This meant the existence of dual authority as the imperial *faujdar*'s position was weakened. In those circumstances it was necessary for the governor to combine the offices of *faujdar* and *diwan* with *subedari* to ensure administrative stability. In contrast to Bengal where the *diwan* created a new type of provincial administrative system, in Awadh the governor was responsible for redefining centre – province relationships. In Bengal the revenue administration was reorganised and the *diwan*'s unfettered powers were a consequence of this process. A large number of *jagirs* were converted into *khalisa* and many were transferred to Orissa. In Awadh the situation was entirely different. Most of the province was assigned in *jagir*. In the early 18th century the proportion of *jagir* to *khalisa* was increasing. The *khalisa* continued to decline and its *jama* had fallen sharply.

In Awadh the difficulties in the provincial administration were mainly concerned with *jagir* administration. The governor of Awadh was probably not in favour of bringing land under *khalisa* since these lands were controlled by the *karoris* (*khalisa* officials) who mainly belonged to the group of local *shaikhzadas* who consistently opposed the power of the governor or *faujdar*. Since the revenue administration of Awadh was

largely based on collection from the *jagirs* of *mansabdars* which was theoretically under the charge of provincial *diwan* but the proper functioning of the *jagir* administration was dependent on the effectiveness of the governor's power to ensure stability in the province. Theoretically Tankwah *jagir* could not be assigned without the seal and signature of either the Emperor or the governor. In the case of slackening of imperial authority the governor took contract of *jagirs* of outsiders in his province. Thus in such cases the governor's power was absolute.

22.9 THE MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION IN AWADH 1707-1722

The *zamindars* represented the group which appropriated the agrarian produce through the mechanism of the hierarchical pattern of land rights which existed in the rural areas. They were the local rural magnates and ruling class. The term *zamindars* as described in the Mughal sources refers to a diverse category of superior rural classes which included even the rajas who had independent territories under their control. Thus, this is the blanket term for those holding superior rights over the produce of the land.

With the emergence of a unified monolithic administrative and economic structure under the Mughals the *zamindars* also slowly got assimilated into it and both were mutually dependent upon each other. Although the *zamindars* as the traditional holders of land rights had been incorporated into the Mughal local administrative machinery however at the slightest opportunity they were willing to change loyalty as long as their hereditary rights were left undisturbed. The *zamindars* remained faithful to the Mughals till such time that their interests were safe. However, the emergence of regions within the Mughal system as powerful political and economic entities brought forth conflicts within the state system with the regional elements aspiring for greater power and autonomy.

22.9.1 The Zamindar Rebellions

In the early years of the 18th century, Awadh was turbulent and unmanageable. A very significant portion of the province witnessed armed defiance to Mughal authority by the *zamindars*. The sources of the period refer to the problems faced by the Mughal government in administering the province. However, it appears that though the *zamindars* uprisings were posing a threat but their scale and dimensions were not so vast. Until 1712 many *zamindars* were still among the supporters of the Mughal state. The *zamindars* in Awadh were predominantly held by Rajput clans. The *Ain-I-Akbari* refers to Muslims including Afghans, Brahmin and other castes as *zamindars* in many *parganas*. In some *parganas* the Rajputs and Afghans were the main opponents whereas in other areas, the different castes unitedly led the banner of revolt. Among the important rebellious *zamindars* were the *zamindars* of Baiswara, Gaur of *parganas* of Sadarpur, Laharpur and Sandi and the Kanhpurias of *pargana* Ibrahimabad. The *talugdars* of *pargana* Bar in Baiswara established a fortress and organised armed resistance to Mughal authority in 1714 but it was crushed. Other instances which can be gleaned from the sources inform us that *zamindars* resisted the payment of revenue to the *jagirdars* which was the major cause of concern to Mughal authority. The defiance and armed opposition of Afghan *zamindars* of *sarkar* Lucknow was also a serious threat to Mughal power. Therefore the Mughals were compelled to appoint capable military leaders to Awadh's governorship and the post of *naib subedar* was also created as part of the effort to curb the strength of the mutinous elements by improving the military power of the Mughals vis-à-vis the local *zamindars*. Though the Mughals were militarily in an advantageous position, but their success against the rebels was not secure and permanent. The Mughals were unable to establish peace and stability in the province. The power of the *zamindars* was based on their social affiliation with the groups which they had organised against the Mughals. The *zamindars* were also familiar with the topography of the regions due to the local origins and thus the

Mughals found it difficult to match their strength in the province. They not only formed organised resistance to the Mughals but they also tried to use their military prowess to harass the peasants and revenue grantees by resorting to illegal and forceable exactions. There are instances which show that within the *zamindar* category too there were internal conflicts. The opposition and clash among the various rural groups was a danger to the entire edifice of the region and the imperial administration. At times one group of *zamindars* allied with the imperial power against the other group. The center utilised one group of *zamindars* as an effective tool for countering other seditious groups. The areas of Awadh which were plagued with *zamindar* rebellions were the southern part of *sarkar* Khairabad and *sarkar* Lucknow (this was the region of Bias and other Rajputs). This region was located on the route which linked it up with important trading centres across the Ganga. This area was rich in agriculture too. Bias Rajputs got transformed into merchants and small towns of this period reveal the importance of commercial and monetary factors. The establishment of three *faujdaris* in this area indicate its importance in this period.

In the rural areas the *zamindars* tried to muster armed groups of kin and mercenaries (*Sipah-o-zamiat*) and built fortresses (*Ihdas-i-qila*) to challenge Mughal power. Those *zamindar* castes rose in rebellion against the state who were not given a high place in the hierarchy of *zamindars* in the late 16th century. The Mughal state in the 17th century had tried to create conditions (money, economy, land market) for marginalising the kin and clan ties of local power groups. However, this policy didn't work in certain areas and *zamindars* emerged as the rivals of Mughal state. However, all groups within the rural areas, could not combine together against the Mughals. The emergence of various *talukdaris* in the 18th century shows that provincial administration was unable to cope with the problem of *zamindar* rebellions. There were various factors responsible such as lack of coordination between governor and *diwan* or amongst governors themselves.

22.9.2 *Madad-i-mash* Grant Holders

Madad-i-mash grants were given to scholars, saints, poor, and persons of high lineage (*aimmadars*). The impact of this kind of revenue assignment was tremendous and the revenue of large territories (at times 2 or 3 *parganas*) was alienated in *suyurghal* (*madad-i-mash*). These holders became wealthy enough to buy *zamindaris* in course of time. This process began in the late 17th century and got strengthened in the 18th century. Some *madad-i-mash* holders got engaged in revenue farming and money lending. The local *sadr* and *mutawalli* were responsible to keep a record of these grants as deputies of the central government but they had to keep the *aimmadars* in good humour to continue in office. By the 18th century the position of *sadr* and *qazi* had become patrimonial. Hereditary possession of grants was a great benefit both in economic and social terms. The *ulema* being the religious intelligentsia was indispensable because the legal system was their preserve. Though the state was not theocratic but administrative regulations did require the sanction and legitimacy of the *ulema* who were also the moral censors of the society. *Madad-i-mash* grants amounted to 1.8 and 5.4% of the total revenue. They were not the property of the holder but were given by the state on loan. It was granted by the emperor or the noble from his *jagir* and it gave the grantee control over the revenue realised from the grant. The *suyurghal* administration needed reorganisation. However, in Shahjahan and Aurangzeb's time the *madad-i-mash* holders were firmly entrenched in their holdings which were made completely hereditary. In the late 17th and early 18th century the *madad-i-mash* holders came into clash with the *zamindars* since they now indulged in amassing wealth through purchase of *zamindaris* and the attempts of the local officials to impose levies on their tax-free assignments was also discouraged by the central authorities.

Although the *madad-i-mash* had become hereditary (by Aurangzeb's order of 1690) but they did not grant ownership rights but was simply given by the state on a loan basis

(*ariyat*). These assignments were privileges which infringed upon the perquisites of the *zamindars* (Hindu or Muslim) in the region. There were several instances when *zamindars* showed their resentment towards the *madad-i-mash* holders and engaged in clashes with them. Both the *zamindars* and *madad-i-mash* holders derived benefit from the peasant's surplus and so their interests were bound to come into conflict. The Mughal government tried to control the rebellious *zamindars* and countered them by aligning with a group of loyal *zamindars*.

22.9.3 Loyal Zamindars

The central government tried to strengthen its hold over the provinces by establishing new loyal *zamindaris* and attempted to bring about reforms in *jagir* administration. This policy was adopted by the Mughal rulers especially Aurangzeb to deal with the problem of rebellion by *zamindar* castes who had developed deep rooted interest in the regions and their areas of influence were converted into their bastions due to the power exercised by them. In *pargana* Unnao, where the Bais Rajputs dominated, it was the policy of central government to provide *zamindaris* to Sayids in order to curb the power of the Bais Rajputs and to consolidate the power of the local officials by infusing loyal elements into *zamindaris*. This administrative measure of Aurangzeb was not guided by his religious orthodoxy. It seems that the encouragement given to Sayids and the grant of *zamindaris* to them did not result in administrative efficiency. Thus the state was instrumental in promoting the establishment of new *zamindaris* through *inam* or through purchase. In the areas which were affected by *zamindar* turbulence, certain groups were given encouragement to counter the rebellious elements. However, this practice did not prove advantageous since the outsiders could be of little help when the provincial officials were engaged in factional fighting. The recalcitrant *zamindars* had traditional social links in the region and the peasants allied with the older *zamindars* against the new elements.

23.9.4 Changes in Jagir Administration

The challenges posed by the *zamindars* and the emergence of the *madad-i-mash* holders as a new influential group brought about disruption of the classical *jagir* system in operation. In the early 18th century the *jagir-i-mahal-i-watan* and long term *jagirs* emerged to deal with the crisis in *jagir* administration. The *jagirdars* were unable to enforce their authority to collect revenue from the regions due to the defiance of local groups. It is well known that the *jagir* was allotted in the area with which the allottee had no links. The transfer of *jagir* was also a measure to ensure that corruption did not creep into the *jagir* system. The *watan jagirs* and *altamgha jagirs* were different in nature. The *watan jagirs* were granted to *zamindars* to incorporate them into the Mughal administrative system through the mechanism of *mansab*. Their ancestral domains became their *watan jagirs* and they got the opportunity to rise in social and administrative position through this mechanism. Jahangir tried to placate the non-*zamindars* by giving them *altamgha jagirs* for life. In the 18th century the *jagir-I-mahal-I-watan* was granted not only to *zamindars* but also to non-*zamindars* in areas which were close to their native place. Sometimes these *jagirs* constituted the whole province.

In order to deal with the *zamindar* rebellions the *jagirdars* had to muster their own resources. The centre was not in a position to help the local officials and therefore the weakening of central authority meant consolidation of the power of local groups. In this situation the rebel infested province could secede from the centre. At times even the *jagirdars* could join hands with the rebel *zamindars*. Since the *jagirdar* represented central power in the province, therefore, to strengthen his position *mansabs* were given to men of his *biradari* (clan) which strengthened the *jagirdars* social connections in the region.

The Indian Muslims emerged as an important section of the Mughal nobility at the court. They were encouraged and were used to counter the *khanzads* (those related

to the royal house). *Shaikhzadas* preferred to have the *jagirs* in their native place. The problems in the realisation of revenue from districts which were not their homelands gave further legitimacy to their view point. The policy of transfer was a deterrent in so far as the *jagirdar's* desire for the growth of the region was concerned. The checks and balances imposed on the *jagirdar's* power in the form of local officials appointed by the centre prevented the misuse of power by the *jagirdars*. In a situation of weakening of the power of the centre the *jagirdars* and *zamindars* became supreme in the region and this led to agrarian distress due to excessive exploitation of the peasantry.

Thus, the *jagir-i-mahal-i-watan* created to restore central authority in the rebellion torn regions instead added further to imperial weakening since the *jagirdars* as administrators proved ineffective. The practice of granting *jagirs* as life long assignments had been applied to *jagir-i-mahal-i-watan* which had also acquired hereditary traits. This feature was now also applied to ordinary *jagirs* in the northern provinces. The emergence of permanent and hereditary *jagirs* shows that the central authority was no longer powerful and the regions were now emerging as strong units. Thus in the 18th century with the beginning of the process of administrative decentralisation the regional elements were strengthened.

Chief Characteristics of Mughal Administration in Awadh

In the 17th and early 18th century agricultural economy became monetised. But in the 18th century the revenue collection as also various government offices were organised on monetary terms. *Faujdari* and even the *subedari* were leased out and the *mahajans* acted as the guarantors in these cases. The tendency to farm out the *jagirs* brought into play various forces such as traders, moneylenders, and moneychangers. *Ijara* (revenue farming) was used as a device for revenue collection in 17th century. It seems that the officials of Aurangzeb were resorting to *ijaradari* extensively. However, in spite of Aurangzeb's efforts to curb it the practice continued unabated but it was limited to provincial revenue officials. During the reign of Farrukh Siyar, *ijara* was officially legitimised and was bestowed even to non-revenue officials (*faujdar*s). In the *jagir* system the transfer criteria was abandoned and the long tenure or life long *jagir* came into being along with the permanent *ijara*. Thus, due to lack of a system of monitoring, *ijara* acquired hereditary characteristics.

The weakening of central authority coincided with the *zamindar* rebellions in the province and factional strife at the court. The clash between centre and province was a long drawn process and it spelt doom for the Mughal power. The *zamindars* though officially regarded as representatives of the state in the region gave a hard blow to the Mughal system in the provinces. The *madad-i-mash* holders were the Muslim theologians who had been granted privileges by the state (they represented the group which legitimised state power through religious ideology). This group tried to extend its power by encroaching upon other *zamindaris* which was disliked by other social groups (*zamindars*). Thus due to their rising aspirations they came into conflict with the other powerful groups in the region.

The long term or life long *jagirs* developed as a response to the problems faced by the *jagirdars* in realizing revenue from the region and also the difficulties faced while taking over their new assignments in cases of transfer. The weakening of central control also got reflected in the ineffectiveness of the *faujdar* and other officials. It was felt that unless local links were developed and local help sought revenue collection would not be forthcoming and for ensuring this *jagirs* would have to be held on a long term basis in the native place (*watan*) of the *jagirdar*.

22.10 NAWABI RULE IN AWADH – 1722-54

The new *subedar* of Awadh Burhan-ul-mulk took up his new assignment in 1722. Several changes were initiated under him and later under Safdarjung especially in *jagir*

administration, *faujdari* administration and *ijara* which had tremendous impact on provincial government's relations with the vast motley of social groups (*madad-i-mash* holders, Afghan and Hindu *zamindars*, *Sheikhzadas* etc.) in the province. Although the *zamindars* posed a threat to the imperial government but they were themselves victims of exploitation by *jagirdars* and *ijaradars* whose power was unchecked.

22.10.1 Jagir Administration

The *amil's* were the local officials who were the representatives of the Imperial government in the provinces. They were the agents of the *jagirdars* and played an important role in *jagir* administration. The *jagirdars* assisted by *amils* also acted as a curb on the power of the *subedar*. In Awadh the *amils* were sometimes of local origin and they were able to stay in the region for long duration even though the *jagirdar* got transferred. During this period they were transformed into revenue farmers and made advance payment to the *jagirdar* from the revenue, which they would collect from the region while they kept a part for themselves. The *subedar* of Awadh, Burhan-ul-mulk realized that the local landed magnates and *amils* would not approve of the administrative reforms, which he wished to introduce in the *jagir* system (this implied fresh assessment of revenue). He therefore adopted the policy of placing the *amils* directly under his control and assigning a part of the revenue of *jagir* for the *amil's* services separately. This measure helped in curbing and crushing the power of the *jagirdars*. The *amils* and *amins* who had earlier been appointed by the emperor were now directly appointed by the governor. The local hereditary officials (*chaudharis* and *qanungoes*) were now accountable to the *amil* and not to the *jagirdar*. The *jagirdar's* powers were thus appropriated by the governor.

The *amil's* function was to collect the revenue from the *jagir* and also *peshkash* from the *jagirdar* and disburse it and surplus amount was to be kept by the *amil's* office. These measures were appreciated by small *jagirdars* who adopted *ijaradari* to ensure proper revenue collection but the bigger *jagirdars* considered the new measures undesirable. The policy of Burhan-ul-mulk was aimed at weakening the power of the *jagirdars* and *mansabdars* who were serving outside the province. Although Burhan-ul-mulk tried to do away with the *jagir* system but he was unsuccessful. Many discrepancies had crept into the *jagir* system (unlawful levies, revenue farming etc.). His successor Safdarjung, did succeed to some extent in reducing the number of *jagirs*.

The efforts of Burhan-ul-mulk, to ensure smooth flow of revenue, entailed the imposition of a cess as a payment for carrying out his revenue collection duty (through *jagirdars* and *amils*). Thus he was able to strengthen his position, which made him bolder to attempt to seek independence from the centre and attempt to dismantle the classical *jagir* system which was the foundation of Mughal power.

22.10.2 Faujdari Administration

In the beginning of 18th Century, there existed eight *faujdaris* in Awadh. By 1722, the *faujdaris* came to be supervised by the governor. The *faujdar*s were appointed and removed at the will and desire of the governor. The *faujdar* was the assistant of the *subedar* in the *sarkar* and *chakla*. However, in this period the *Faujdari* had been transformed. It combined the matters related to revenue together with the legal aspects. The *faujdar* was now also known as *nazim* or *naib*. The office of *Faujdar* and local (*pargana* level) official (*qanungos*) were combined at times. Sometimes this office was also given on *ijara* (contract). Thus the classical Mughal *faujdar* (responsible for maintaining law and order) got metamorphosed and at the *sarkar* level this office was referred to by different nomenclature viz. *nizamat*, *niyabat*.

22.10.3 Role of Zamindars

Burhan-ul-mulk tried to bring the Baiswara *zamindars* under his close scrutiny and after assessing the situation he imposed an increased revenue demand on them since he

found them withholding payments to the central treasury. The fruits of economic prosperity of Awadh during this period were being monopolised by the *zamindars* at the cost of the peasants and the center. He also tried to win over *zamindars* who could prove useful to him by giving them *faujdar* rights, additional territories etc. The non-Rajput elements (*chaudharis and qanungoes*) were also patronised to counter the Rajputs. The concessions given by Burhan-ul-mulk to the powerful *zamindars* helped him in consolidating his power in Awadh. Some small *zamindars* of Awadh also held *mansabs*. However, these intermediary *zamindars* could not become rajas or chiefs.

Safdarjung entered into a new agreement with older big *zamindars*. This was in some cases called *taahhud* which meant that the *zamindar* had to give a specific sum from the territory leased out to him. This contract was sometimes also extended to local officials. The agreement carried with it some duties related to maintenance of law and order and troops. The governor's powers had been greatly enhanced since the office of the *diwan* and the administration of *jagirs* was brought directly under his supervision. The province of Awadh was virtually administered by the governor on lease and he further leased out the administrative duties and perquisites associated with them to *zamindars* and officials. The governor was allowed to function independently in the province provided he made regular payment to the centre. The contractual system adopted at the provincial level suggests that a well developed monetary system must have been operational. It seems that some of the *ijaradars* might have acted as money lenders (*mahajans*) and merchants. It appears that the duration and specially the amount payable in the context of *ijara* was at times subject to revision. These *ijaras* have also been described as *hukumat* and *nizammat*.

22.10.4 Role of *Madad-i-mash* Holders

Burhan-ul-mulk's policy was aimed at improvising the administration of the province. To implement this policy he tried to resume the grants of *madad-i-mash* holders and to bring them under the purview of assessment. His strict measures to increase revenue collection led to rise in the collections. The *madad-i-mash* holders had also acquired *zamindaris*. They opposed the new measures of the governor and mobilised the peasants and *Shaikhzadas* (Indian Muslim nobles in imperial service) against the governor. The governor of Awadh also tried to subdue the *zamindars* either through diplomacy or force. By 1730 this mission was by and large achieved and with the increase in revenue collection, *madad-i-mash* grantees were left undisturbed and the grants were confirmed. The process of enquiry in the *madad-i-mash* grants which had started since 1722 continued in this period and now it was not regarded as a grant on loan but came to be included in the category of *zamindari* and *milkiyat* since these grants had now been subjected to light assessment.

On the basis of being transformed from revenue free grants to grants on which a very small levy was imposed, these grants acquired the characteristics of *zamindari*. The *zamindars* had resented the privileges of the *madad-i-mash* holders. The new measures of imposing levies on *madad-i-mash* was welcomed by the *zamindars*. The *madad-i-mash* grantees could also be appeased since the grants could now be treated at par with *zamindaris*.

Other Local Groups

The local groups in Awadh especially the *Shaikhzadas* (Indian Muslims) were incorporated into the provincial administration (including army) during Burhan-ul-mulk's period. The Awadhi communities in imperial service shifted to provincial administration with the weakening of central power and the realisation that there were very few avenues for advancement at the centre. Burhan-ul-mulk also appointed Hindus in his administration. The Hindu chiefs of Awadh were given *mansabs* and were appointed as local and provincial officials (*qanungos, chaudharis, faujdar* and *diwan*).

Features of Nawabi Rule

It seems that the *subedar* of Awadh continued to depend on the classical Mughal administrative system for governance. However a few changes were introduced specially in the field of *jagir* administration. The central agents posted in *jagirs* were now directly accountable to the governor. Safdarjung was able to drastically reduce the number of *jagirs* assigned to *jagirdars*. The institution of *faujdari* also underwent transformation. The territorial jurisdiction of *faujdar* was now confined to *pargana* level and in *sarkars* and *chaklas* (group of *parganas*) the *nazims* or *naibs* emerged as an alternative source of authority who exercised control over fiscal and military administration. The decline of *faujdari* should be seen in the context of the development of *ijaradari* (which combined fiscal and administrative authority). The policy of giving patronage to big and older *zamindars* paid rich dividends. The *subedars* entered into an agreement with powerful *zamindars* to pay a fixed sum annually and this contract also placed upon them administrative and military responsibility and power. The emergence of *talukdaris* in the 18th century can be traced to this policy. The *madad-i-mash* grantees and *shaikhzadas* who were related to them through kin ties constituted an important local force. The *subedar* of Awadh followed a policy of conciliation towards these groups.

Burhan-ul-mulk had been transferred to Malwa but he came to Awadh in defiance of imperial order. In 1736 Burhan-ul-mulk had bought the *subedari* of Allahabd by paying *peshkash* (tribute). After Burhan-ul-mulk his successor (his nephew Safdar Jang) sought confirmation of the *subedari* of Awadh from the emperor but regarded it as inheritance. Safdar Jang gave two crores of Rupees from the provincial funds as *peshkash* for obtaining the *subedari* in his home country for life. After his death Burhan-ul-mulk's *jagirs* outside Awadh were resumed and were not inherited by Safdar Jang. However, Safdar Jang seized (took over) the imperial right of bestowing titles and mansabs. The nominal consent of the emperor was however sought though the emperor's advice could be disregarded if it was not acceptable to the governor. *Jagirs* were now granted and resumed by the governor and the Emperor's consent was a formality.

In the 18th century Awadh witnessed turmoil, which reflected the aspirations of local groups to have a share in political power. The *subedar* of Awadh took advantage of the weakening of central authority, which created conducive conditions for pursuing the ambition to emerge as an independent leader of the province acting in collusion with the local power brokers.

22.11 SUMMARY

We have analysed the rise of successor states. Bengal gained autonomy under the diwan appointed by Aurangzeb, Murshid Quli Khan. Bengal had a special position as a Mughal province with a low jama and few jagirs. Large *zamindaris* and practice of *ijaradari* came into existence in the 18th century and a network of collaboration developed between the *Nawabs*, bankers and the *zamindars*. In the Deccan the nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah who was made *subedar* by the Emperor laid the foundation of the independent state of Hyderabad. The administrative system was modeled on the Mughal pattern however the classical *mansab* and *jagir* system underwent a transformation. The composition of nobility changed under the Nizam. Offices like *daftardar* and contractual offices like *talukdar* emerged. *Ijaradari* also existed. In Awadh Burhan-ul-mulk established the new *Nawabi*. Several changes were introduced in the *jagir* and *faujdari* administration. *Ijaradari* was practiced. *Talukdaris* also emerged. The autonomy attained by these states was reflected in the steps taken by the rulers: viz. appointment of *faujdar*s, *Qiladar*s, *diwan*, conferment of *mansab/jagir* without consulting the Emperor. Initially though they continued to pay nominal suzerainty to the Emperor, however, later this too was withdrawn.

22.12 EXERCISES

- 1) Discuss the administrative measures of Murshid Quli Khan which laid the foundation of independent Bengal.
- 2) Analyse the features of administration during Nawabi rule in Awadh.



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